MY LLOYD GEORGE DIARY

By the same author

MY NORTHCLIFFE DIARY
MARRIAGE AT 6 A.M.
BRIAN
ROUND THE WORLD WITH
TOM CLARKE

MY LLOYD GEORGE DIARY

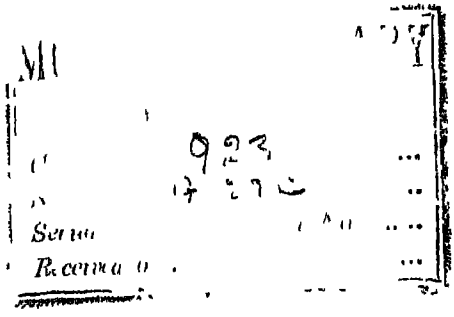
by

TOM CLARKE



METHUEN & CO. LTD. LONDON
36 Essex Street Strand W.C.2

First published in 1939



1178

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Lloyd George and Me—A Wartime Telephone Voice—Paths Cross after Ten Years—The Man Himself—Liberalism in Schism—Journalism and Politics—Lloyd George's Secret of Vitality	1
II.	Cadburys and the *Daily News*—The 'End of the Corridor'—A Dinner with Lloyd George—Asquith Leaves the Liberal 'Bridge'—Duel for Leadership	18
III.	Swallowing the *Westminster Gazette*—Newspaper Rivalries—The King and the *Daily News*—Lloyd George and the Death of Lord Oxford—Lord Cowdray Takes a Hand—The Red Light for Lloyd George?—Bernard Shaw Interlude—Pulling the Editor's Leg	28
IV.	Lloyd George and the 1929 Election—Liberal 'Dog-fight'—Lady Oxford Shows her Rapier—Lloyd George Talks of Asquith and Northcliffe—Women and Political Meetings—An Election Campaign Fails	41
V.	A Rest from Politics—Lord Beaverbrook and Me —The 'Crusader' Tempts—Tim Healy at Cherkley—The 'Wicked Uncles'—Another Shaw Interlude	54
VI.	I meet Lady Oxford—Tête-à-tête at Bedford Square—Her Balfour Article—Mrs. Snowden's Lloyd George Luncheon—Walter Layton comes to Town—Official Secrets Act—I Apologize to Amy Johnson	64
VII.	Tragedy of the *Daily Chronicle*—Puzzled Prince—Lloyd George at the Derby—My Talks with Simon and Samuel—Beaverbrook's Party—H. G. Wells, Lloyd George, and Others—Liberalism in Sunset—The Premier and the Press—Lady Oxford writes on Lord Birkenhead	77

CHAPTER PAGE

VIII. A Churchill Interlude—Youth Party at Lovely Westerham—A Roving Dialogue—The 'Lloyd George' Raspberries 95

IX. Talk with Lord Riddell—Shadow of the 'Great Depression'—Lloyd George and his Forlorn Party—Whispering Enemies—'He is Finished'—Resurgence in the Air—The 'Co-op' at Admiralty House—Lady Oxford Again—Lloyd George's Two Dinner Parties—Talks on Labour, Royalty, Winston, and War 102

X. Edgar Wallace on Lloyd George—Strong Meat from Birrell at Lady Lavery's Party—Liberal Defections—W. R. Hearst and Lloyd George—My 'Tiff' with American Newspaper Magnate 120

XI. Political Convulsion—Lloyd George and the 1931 'National Government'—Newspaper Circulation War While the World Rocks—Talks at Russian Embassy and with 'Jimmy' Thomas 127

XII. Liberalism in the Doldrums—Staging a Lloyd George 'Come-Back'—Cowdray and the Divided Party 137

XIII. Wells on Mussolini—The King Debunks the 'Movies'—Lady Oxford at the Derby and Ascot—Paralysis of Democracy—The American Debt—Beaverbrook Again—Lady Lavery Ticks off Lady Oxford—Randolph Churchill and Lady Diana Cooper—J. S. Elias Arrives 144

XIV. Lloyd George on Democracy's Need of Leadership—Another Midlothian Campaign?—Sir Herbert Samuel's Ottawa Dilemma—More Lady Oxford Letters—Beaverbrook and Food Policy—Germany Demands Equal Status 156

XV. Samuel Leaves the 'National Government'—Cold Shoulder for Lloyd George—Liberal Revival Flop—Intensified Newspaper War—H. G. Wells on This Sorry World—Lady Oxford and the Rector of Stiffkey 167

CHAPTER PAGE

XVI. Samuel Takes the Liberal Helm—Lloyd George Spills a Mouthful at Churt—Another Gladstone Wanted—A Peep at the Memoirs—The 'Eton-Balliol Gang'—Asquith a Good Fellow but no War Winner—The 'Push and Go' Men—Views on the Press 181

XVII. Russian Stupidities—A Week-end with Esmond Harmsworth—The Shadow of Hitler—Lady Oxford and 'The Lloyd George Admirers'—Her 2 a.m. Letter 196

XVIII. Lloyd George and Lord Riddell—A Post-War 'Rift'—Lord Snowden Looks Back—Rothermere Inspects Me—Lloyd George and a Date in 1916—What Cyril Asquith Wanted to Know 217

XIX. Lloyd George and British Farming—My Departure from Bouverie Street—Unexpected Drama at Churt—Freedom 233

Index 247

CHAPTER I

Lloyd George and Me—A Wartime Telephone Voice—Paths Cross after Ten Years—The Man Himself—Liberalism in Schism—Journalism and Politics—Lloyd George's Secret of Vitality.

ON an evening in December 1916 the news-room of London's *Daily Mail* was in the fever of big events. A war-tired but tight-lipped public awaited the new Cabinet. Asquith had disappeared from the Prime Ministership to make way for Lloyd George. We journalists were writing up the list of members of the new ministry—the men who were to give a new and winning direction to the war. Leader-writers fussed about the corridors. Reporters awaited their instructions to go and see if this new minister or that would talk for publication. I sat at the night news editor's desk. One of the four telephones tinkled——

'Stand by for the Chief,' came the switchboard operator's message. The Chief was Northcliffe.

He asked me for some information, I forget what, but I failed him. He said, 'Ring up Lloyd George and ask him. Give him my compliments and tell him I told you to ring him up at any time on vital matters.'

That was my first contact with Lloyd George—a voice at the other end of a telephone. I cannot help remembering as I begin this book that he was hot and fresh from his victorious duel with Asquith.

That duel and its consequences down the years form the background of my own story of Lloyd George.

My recollection of that night is that he was irritated and testy. I do not think he was partial to telephone talks. He certainly could not be expected, however grateful he may have been for Northcliffe's assistance in helping him into Asquith's shoes, to relish being disturbed at 10 p.m. by a pushful young journalist presenting him with Lord Northcliffe's somewhat impertinent compliments.

It is not of the associations of those war years, fleeting and fugitive, that I now write. They have already been recorded in a former book, *My Northcliffe Diary*. Such associations

came abruptly to a stop when the two great men finally fell out at the end of the war. I did not then suspect for a moment that I should ever cross Lloyd George's path again, especially as I said good-bye to England when Northcliffe died, and went for a three years' spell in Australian journalism. Yet within ten years of that telephonic introduction he was to come again as a formidable figure in the shaping of my destiny; not as an elusive and impatient speaker at the other end of a wire; but as the man himself, baring to me, consciously or unconsciously, all his strange mixture of charm and ruthlessness, kindness and anger, vivacity and sullenness, democracy and dictatorship. When that happened, whether I liked the man or no, I realized that I had been thrown up again, as I had been with Northcliffe, into the close orbit of one of the great men of my time, a man in millions.

The man himself! That is what I hope it may be given to me to reveal in this book. It is based on the diaries I kept during the years 1926–33 when I was 'on the bridge' of London's leading Liberal daily newspaper. Lloyd George, as leader of what was left of the almost impotent Liberal Party, often loomed large in my comings and goings. It amuses me as I write to carry the nautical simile farther in fancy. I see Lloyd George as the most persistent of the plethora of pilots who offered their guidance through the rocky and ever-changing channels which a Liberal newspaper had then to navigate. I remember a worthy rival, frequently hard on his heels, with a totally different chart for my consideration. And that was a woman—none other than the wife of the man he had in 1916 ousted from the Premiership. Lady Oxford's devotion to her great husband's memory made her a formidable and piquant challenger at all times to Lloyd George when he prowled in the neighbourhood of our 'bridge'. It made navigation a little difficult, but her constant and glowing loyalty to the defeated and (as she believed) injured dead was something one could understand and salute. I came to think of Lady Oxford and Lloyd George as duellists for the soul of Liberalism—the Welsh Wizard versus the Widow who Would not Yield.

Lady Oxford was a better fighter than some of the over-intellectualized, over-privileged people who paraded her late husband's banner. I am grateful to her for permission to reproduce in these pages many of the letters she wrote to me. She has a principal part in my diary. Indeed so have other people, but the solo title is justified because Lloyd George (to pass from nautical to stage simile) was the star figure on the boards, when, from a front seat in the stalls, I watched the unfolding of the tragic play, 'Sunset of Liberalism'.

When future historians come to write in better perspective than is now possible of Lloyd George, that electric phenomenon of British political life, to assess his work and analyse the riddle of his personality, they will find at their disposal a wealth of formal and documented biographies telling his story from cradle to grave. It is no purpose of this book to compete with such material, but my diary pictures may help others to see him as he was at an important period in our political history. I have a feeling of immodesty in what I am writing next—that few formal biographies, often too full of dates (not to say sugar), have ever given me a picture of their subject sufficiently living and human to satisfy Stevenson's 'razor-edged curiosity'. How often does the biographer, preparing his work at second hand, or under authority, which is worse, obscure the real man he is depicting behind a wearying framework of dates and achievements. The reader learns what the man did; but not what he was. It seems to me that even one short article of a thousand words describing frankly, and immediately, one's meeting with a man, and recording not only what he said, but also how he said it, and adding the inconsequentional little things of the moment, may give a sharper picture of a personality than pages of formal flattery. It is on such fragments of personal and immediately recorded experience that I try to make my living pictures of Lloyd George.

So, though this is by no means Lloyd George's life, it is partly a record from my diary of the real man as he appeared to me during those eight years. In my editorial work I found it advisable, not to say pleasurable, to keep a fairly

regular diary. Lloyd George is entrenched in its pages. He bobs in for a fleeting second and then comes back to hold the floor for an hour. Now he storms in his office. A few pages farther on he is the happy smiling farmer of Churt. The references to him are long or short according to my whim, or the time a busy journalist had at his disposal. My diary extracts are given as they were written at the time, save for correcting here and there blemishes of too hurried expression—records of talks, incidents, impressions, and opinions following encounters in his offices, at his meetings, in trains or in the relatively reposeful atmosphere of his homes in town or country. They can be of no honest value unless I leave them unvarnished on the whole as they are, even with their contradictions, even at the expense of literary reputation, political judgment, and possibly some friendships.

I could no more resist making notes about Lloyd George than I can now resist letting the world have them. Despite the embarrassments and trials of working alongside genius I can still consider it my good fortune to have been associated with two dynamic men like Northcliffe and Lloyd George. Hardly had I escaped the one, or shall I say without irreverence, barely had he escaped me to a too-early grave, than I was forced to sit up and take notice of the other. The diary I had put away with relief with the passing of Northcliffe had to be reopened for Lloyd George. Northcliffe was dead when I published my story of him. I could not publish it while he was alive, for I was in his employ. With Lloyd George it is different. I have never been in his employ. Another apology—if apology need be given for attempting a picture of puzzling genius—I have dreamed of putting this book together for years. Too many of us frail beings stop at dreams. We postpone action to the days of retirement. Yet none of us grows younger. As for me, writing, and editing writings, has never come easy, and the longer one waits the less likely is one to retain the discipline that makes the pen march. So I do it now.

Lady Oxford recently asked me, 'Is Lloyd George still your hero?' Journalists have no heroes. No lasting ones, at

any rate. I never looked at Lloyd George deliberately in that light, though some of my diary entries may give that impression. I will not alter them. Some of my enthusiasms may now have waned, just as some of my criticisms and irritations may now cause a tolerant smile; but my moods in relation to my subject must be recorded as I felt them at the time. Hero or not, however, Lloyd George was a man on the lips of the whole world. Lloyd George the man, rather than the politician, interested (and still interests) me. He holds the secret of mass appeal Why? Like Northcliffe, he came from comparative obscurity to great power and material success. I like studying and reading about men like that, and I think most average people do, and I certainly enjoy meeting and knowing them. Lloyd George appeals to the ordinary folk because his story has all the ingredients that show up their own frustrated lives. His is a story which offers them mental escape from the uneventful drabness of their own existence—a story of action and challenge; of achievement after obscurity; of adventure and audacity. Every man possibly sees himself a potential Lloyd George 'had I had the chance'. His very terrier-like appearance, his slightness of stature, make him a David challenging the Goliaths—the stumpy legs, knees-in, and the firmly planted feet—hands often in front of the body as if ready to grasp an opponent. His ruthless attacks on his social betters, his barging in where angels feared to tread against the Dragon of Privilege; his masterfulness on the political highway—all these thing make him, if not a hero, at least a fascinating study of courage and the power-urge in men. His life is a romance of fact; and that remains stranger and more attractive, than fiction.

In July 1926 I joined the *Daily News* as Managing Editor. Henry Cadbury had come to Melbourne to invite me to return to London and I had yielded, not without regrets, for life and work in Australia had been on the whole pleasant and profitable. Since the background of my diaries is my newspaper work for the Cadburys, it is perhaps appropriate to relate the circumstances of my joining them. It is a personal note which may help the flow of my story.

I was puzzled when Henry Cadbury came to Australia to seek my services on a Liberal paper of world repute, for I had no pretensions as a political journalist. I had had a severe apprenticeship in the Northcliffe school where hard news was the order of the day and to the devil with party politics. As I listened to Henry Cadbury I recalled Northcliffe showing me years before something he had written on newspaper control: 'A wide circle of acquaintances among people like politicians is especially to be avoided. It is part of the business of a newspaper to get news and to print it. It is part of the business of a politician to prevent certain news being printed. For this reason the politician often takes a newspaperman into his confidence for the mere purpose of preventing the publication of the news he deems objectionable to his interests.' My experience with Northcliffe had endowed me with a wariness, almost amounting to open mistrust, of most professional politicians. Thus, I fear, I had never been attracted to 'political journalism' or to any political party. All I wanted to see of politics in any paper I might have the fortune to control was political news, not party propaganda.

Could I, I asked myself that day in 1926, accept with honesty any position of authority on a paper as professedly political as the *Daily News*? I knew it was a true jest about newspapers that the staffs of Liberal papers were mostly Tories, and Tory papers, Liberals, or even Socialists. But it was different taking a high executive position. If one did that he should surely be in line with a paper's political policy. Of course one could take the view that a journalist was like a barrister, free to accept any brief that came his way; but it seemed to me unlikely that that would work in the kind of post I was being offered. For the first time in my life I brought such political soul as I possessed out of its cupboard for examination. I found I had been brought up in the Gladstonian-Liberal tradition in a Lancashire Nonconformist household. So far so good. No doubt, as I told Henry Cadbury, that lingered in the blood. I was all for progressive social legislation. I was all for the rights of the individual. I was all for peace and arbitration. I was all for the underdog. I was all for the ethical teaching of

Christianity. I was all for better housing and better education and better international understanding. There were two other important matters—the Empire on the one hand and Free Trade on the other. I had from time to time visited, and dwelt in, various parts of the Empire, from small Crown Colonies to big self-governing Dominions. I was inevitably and definitely Empire-minded. The united democracies of home and overseas Britain to my mind meant peace and liberty. This did not mean I was anti-League of Nations. After all, if civilization meant anything it meant acceptance of some such body as the League for settling disputes without the sword; but if, as some thought, it was before its time and the nations refused to get in step, then there was nothing for it but bringing the Empire still closer together, maybe in some kind of understanding with other countries of liberal outlook, and taking good care that we secured our democratic freedom with our own strength. I felt there was a tendency in many Liberal quarters to sniff at the British Empire; that too often they put every country in the right but their own. As for Free Trade, I had a perfectly open mind. I could not develop the white heat of some fanatical Liberals. It seemed to me that Free Trade or Tariffs was a business matter and ought not to be the play of party politics.

In short, I found myself something of a mental Radical, with a feeling that the war had been over long enough for Liberalism to recatch the changing tide.

Not only was I mistaken in that, but I might also have spared myself all this stocktaking. I dare say Henry Cadbury was comforted by discovering that my attitude towards the spirit of Liberalism, even if on some points somewhat critical, was apparently not altogether unsound. But he was not thinking very much of political philosophies when he came to seek my services. He was thinking of newspapers pure and simple, and of the struggle brewing in Fleet Street rather than Downing Street.

My attitude of detachment concerning party politics appeared to please rather than worry him. As we talked, any importance I had attached to political implications receded to the dim background and he made it plain that

what the paper wanted was a journalist before a politician; even if the journalist had once marched under the hated Northcliffe banner, as I had done. What was wanted was the *Daily News* in the million-sale class. There were at that time two other Liberal daily newspapers in the London field. The *Daily Chronicle* was probably in the strongest position. It represented the Lloyd George wing of schismatic Liberalism. The *Westminster Gazette*, the rather anaemic morning perpetuator of the name of a former full-blooded evening paper, was a terrier yelping at the heels of bigger dogs. It voiced exclusively the hopes and aspirations of the doctrinaire Asquithians, and had, therefore, what may be called without disrespect, a 'nuisance value', in the developing scramble of the three Liberal morning papers for prestige and circulation. The *Daily News* proclaimed itself as plain Liberal, with an implication of independence of any wing of the party. I do not know whether Henry Cadbury, as we talked in Menzies Hotel, Melbourne, saw his *Daily News* ultimately swallowing up (as it did) those two rival Liberal papers. I do not know if that was in his mind when I told him there was the 'smell of battle' in what he was saying to me. He subsequently wrote that he 'liked the reference to the "smell of battle"', and thought that was the spirit of Bouverie Street, adding, 'I agree with you, that there are interesting times ahead for us in Fleet Street'.

The smell of battle! It tickled me immensely that a Quaker should have seized on the phrase and nursed it in his memory. Like many millions of Englishmen, I did not then know my Quakers. Do not misunderstand me. I have the greatest respect for them. The 70,000 or 80,000 in this country (and that is all their numbers amount to), require no commendation or patronage from me, but I must confess I admire their poise in all matters, material or spiritual. I envy them their power for good and I envy them the way they employ that power in all countries, especially for the emancipation of suffering humanity. What so many of us—the uninformed multitude outside a fold as exclusive as the Royal Enclosure at Ascot—do not know, is that as hard-headed business men they are in the

end unbeatable. There is nothing wrong about that, but we outside the fold are apt to think only of the Quakers in their idealizations or their spiritual workings. Those are fundamental, but in the workaday world there is nothing sloppy or sentimental about your Quaker—not even in his charity. He is not unjust, not ungenerous (that is my experience); but he does not let idealism upset his business realism. He hates excitement and highly charged or dramatic atmospheres. Cynics will tell you that the number of super-tax payers in this country is roughly the number of Quakers. It was this hard-headed practicalness that I naturally came most in touch with when I entered their service. The Quakers may not put money-making as the highest form of human endeavour; they may with all truth say they do not engage in an enterprise with the desire of necessarily making money, but they quite rightly hate losing it just as much as any other poor mortals, and they will hang on to the bitter end if there is the remotest chance—and often when there isn't—of getting it back.

Now the Cadburys had hung on to the *Daily News* for years in the determination to see some return for the very large sums devoted by George Cadbury to the building up of the paper in the early stages of his ownership. He had come into the newspaper world not to make money, but with the object of using the Press as a means of social service. But neither he, nor those who followed, thought it necessary to lose money over the job.

Those in control, after years of hard, practical experience, had no illusions left about the heartbreaking difficulties of making a newspaper a financial success. I felt they had realized that journalism merely as an idealist crusade for the elevation of mankind could not be made to pay. I felt they knew full well, also, that if a newspaper did not prosper, its usefulness for social service was greatly impaired. So, while not wishing, or intending, to depart from George Cadbury's altruistic policy, in so far as it was practicable to carry it out in newspaper work, they were diamond clear that the newspaper business could not be run as a priesthood. With increasing business competition, old methods would have to make way for new.

That was where I was to come in—to revitalize a venerable institution that had perhaps been taking itself too solemnly, had become overweighted with dignity and prestige; factors admirable enough in themselves but not necessarily contributing to financial success. What was needed was a tightening up of the news organization, more 'scoops' and on a bigger scale, renewed mental energy and drive in presentation and make-up; for the public had eyes to appeal to as well as minds. Things needed planning farther ahead. The staff required gingering up. A new building was nearing completion. New methods of publicity and marketing for the paper were demanded. A central garage was to be built across the river. The advertisement staff had got grand new offices in Fleet Street. The sale of the paper was steady. Too steady. Would I come back home and help in the task of moving it up?

'I shall want a free hand,' I said to Henry Cadbury in Melbourne.

'You will have nothing to complain of under that head.'

In our mutual enthusiasm I suppose we thought only of a newspaper which was going to shake up all our rivals in the primary function of news. I wasn't to worry my head about policy. I was to think in terms of an independent newspaper, as Northcliffe and Beaverbrook had done (and not without success and profit). Here was my own school of newspaper thought. Here, I convinced myself, was a job I could tackle with relish and clarity of conscience. The new generation was in revolt against the stodgy party-tied newspaper; and was also developing a contempt for the childish sensationalism and pornography of some others. What a chance to show that you could deal with important affairs without being stodgy, could interpret life with colour without being obscene; could be bright without being sensational; and could be of social service without boring your readers.

'Of course some of your older readers will inevitably be shocked at things I shall do,' I said, 'but it's the new young generation of readers we have to attract.'

'Not a bad thing to surprise people sometimes.'

That was how things stood when I sailed for England to

take a place at the helm of the mouthpiece of British Liberalism in London. If I had my time to come over again, knowing all I do now, I do not think I should sail. Not, at any rate, unless all of us concerned, myself included, were less woolly on that matter of policy. I am amazed that it took 7½ years for the break to come. Even then we could part friends. Taking that editorship was one of the mistakes of my career, for it drove me into a political world I neither understood nor wanted to. The word policy, I ought to have known, has far more than a mere political significance. If a paper has any pretensions to a political policy, such policy cannot be locked away in a separate compartment from its news policy. Independence proved a futile cue. I ought to have known that it would be so. Probably I fell away from my own supposed standards of detachment as I came under the bothersome spell, now of this, now of that, aspirant for the leadership of the dying Liberal Party.

First and foremost among them was Lloyd George. Quite soon he torpedoed my hope that the politicians would leave me in peace. Later came others, eager to air their political goods in my shop window. The factions of splintered Liberalism, moreover, had their own disciples in our office councils. When in later years the *Daily News* took to its bosom its two rival Liberal papers, and for a time there were three Boards of Directors, the attempt to run it with reasonable objectiveness as a newspaper became more difficult than ever. If Lloyd George chanced to arrive in the news (as he was always doing) the camp led by Lord Cowdray would show discomfort. If the Asquith–Grey element came into news prominence, I was sure to feel a cold draught down the office corridor from the disciples of the little man of Churt. If it were Sir Herbert Samuel or Sir John Simon some one or other from one Board or other would growl or sulk. All this was not without its comic side. I tried to sit back and watch the rivals cancel each other out. As Henry Cadbury once said to me: 'What an asset your objectiveness is.'

Influences outside the office from time to time took a

hand in pulling a bewildered editor this way or that. One whose attentions were never unwelcome, though sometimes embarrassing, was Lady Oxford. She wrote (sometimes at 2 a.m.) or talked, or argued, with frankness and with an intelligence that was a tonic. Also, unlike some others who offered advice on running a newspaper, she had some idea of news values and organization. She was not the equal of Lloyd George in that respect. He knew he was news ('The Prince of Wales and I, so the reporters say, are always news,' he once said) and he knew the right way and the right time to let the news 'break'. Also he knew how to treat, and even flatter, the humblest working journalist, and he was very rarely inaccessible to the Press. He knew the secrets of edition times and therefore the way to get the widest publicity for his speeches. He had assessed the varying values of being reported in morning, evening or Sunday papers. He thought the best time to make a big speech was Saturday afternoon, in time for the evenings to get a small 'bite'. Then the Sunday papers gave a full report, and the morning papers on Monday always followed up.

My diaries cannot be expected to make pleasant reading for those who hold fast to the old Liberalism. The story is of sunset. Sunset and squabble. If I developed any responsiveness to the lamentable dog-fight of those eight years it was, I suppose, with all his faults towards Lloyd George. Among all those who were aiming, earnestly no doubt, to piece together a shattered party, he was the one with the supreme qualities of imagination, drive, and leadership. He had the essential 'common touch', the essential gift of oratory, and the essential crowd magnetism. He was warm. The others were cold. Perhaps I am wrong in thinking these qualities of his were appropriate to party leadership in the circumstances of the time. Dictatorships were suspiciously in the air, and these qualities I mention are the main ingredients of Dictatorship as well as of Leadership. Indeed, as I write, I am reflecting that the picture I carry in my mind of Lloyd George is one that looks strikingly like a would-be benevolent Dictator. I did not know him in his early fiery days, the champion of freedom, the provoker of authority, the raider of the 'hen-roosts'

of the rich, the challenger of all privilege, the Limehouse baiter of the Dukes, the Pacifist sympathizer with the Boers. I first knew him as the War-Dictator. When our paths met again in these later years the dictatorial tendency was dormant but not dead. His enemies said he aimed at being Liberal Party Dictator. Mr. Hugh Edwards has written of him: 'Despite autocracy in his personal habits and with his colleagues, he will be regarded as one of the greatest democrats and liberators of history.' One can subscribe to that while noting the admission of a commanding mentality. His autocracy was apparent again in his later days when I came to know him well. I find myself setting him down in a diary note 'really like an enlightened Conservative in his general attitude to life'.

I often pondered as I watched Lloyd George walking his acres at Churt what mental readjustment his later years had brought him. He would not have admitted any. Yet even when in earlier days he was the fiery champion of Radicalism he must have had many secret inward tussles with his impatient dictatorial side.

Was this man, whose autocratic make-up enabled him to ride the gale during the greatest war in history, out of place for the post-War Age of Discussion? We had seen him flower into leadership and virtual dictatorship. The soil suited. Did it suit after the War and when the Age of Discussion, at least in Britain and the Empire and other democratic lands, had returned? In my post-War talks with him I had the impression that he missed his war-time authority; that he would have now favoured some political scheme of things providing for an 'Aristocracy of Politics', with Key Men watching over a highly concentrated State machine. No voluble committees to throw sand in the bearings. Ramsay MacDonald, I dare say, had the same thing in mind in 1929 when he talked of a possible new conception of Parliament as a 'Council of State'. In war (as in peace) Lloyd George had to accept the committee system that often handcuffs Democracies *vis-à-vis* Dictators, but how often he said to me that he 'loathed the committee mind'. Inevitable, I dare say, in a man endowed with the temper for quick decision and action.

Hitler, it might be noted in passing, admits having dis-

covered in Lloyd George some of the virtues he recognizes in himself. The gift of oratory, for instance, not very common among Germans. In *My Struggle* the champion of all modern dictators tells how he became an orator at mass meetings and that 'pathos and gesture', with which he worked up his hearers to the same frenzy as himself, became 'a matter of second nature to me'. He says that Lloyd George with his 'towering political capacity . . . opened the hearts of his people to him . . .' and made them pay 'active obedience to his will'. Didn't Lloyd George once say that 'The art of oratory is to move men to immediate action'? I don't agree that his oratory was ever so frenzied as Hitler's. It ran on ball bearings, with none of the intoxicated bumpiness of Hitler's fanatical outpourings. There was more latent nervousness about Lloyd George's oratory. Like John Bright, he usually had 'a vacuum behind the waistcoat' at his first facing an audience. I believe Lloyd George got some of his rhetorical inspirations from the classics as well as from the Welsh mountains, and a war-time colleague of his once told me there is on the shelves of the Cabinet Room in Downing Street a copy of Jowett's *Dialogues of Plato* with passages underlined in red ink.

Yet despite any dictatorial leanings (perhaps because of them) I believe Lloyd George could have saved at least the label for Liberalism had he been given his chance by those professing a desire to save it. Their naggings of him, and their whispers of lack of trust, only helped to fan the flame in him. What I feel the Liberal Party needed at the time of which I write was some discipline of the warring elements, some calling to heel of the unruly terriers. No one could have done it but Lloyd George. He would have had a great following of rank and file. Even Democracy must perish without discipline, however distasteful the word may be to the doctrinaires. I think the opponents of Lloyd George in his own camp knew all this. I do not think they had any inherent objection to ruthless measures to pull the party together, for there is, believe me, no lack of the quality of ruthlessness among the individualistic Liberals. But the plain fact is they did not trust Lloyd George, and there was

no one else in their camp who had the energy, the capacity, or the popular 'appeal' to do the job. Moreover, many of them were aloof from their own rank and file. They did not understand them as he did, and they feared Lloyd George's magnetic influence among the Liberals in the highways and byways. He was too clever for their liking, and they could not dream of trusting him alone with the raw material of Liberalism.

Not only Liberals thought Lloyd George too smart for them. His cardinal fault in the eyes of most other critics was his uncanny cleverness, and his pride in it. It seemed to them to be the inescapable background for all his political activities. They said he carried his cleverness to the point of stupidity. It made him; and it unmade him. I once heard Mr. Stanley Baldwin (now Lord Baldwin) say that when he retired from politics he would consider writing a book to be entitled *The Stupidities of the Very Clever*, and the circumstances of the occasion left no doubt for whom this oblique thrust was meant. There is an English saying 'Too clever by half'. Lloyd George never comprehended it, nor the suspicion engendered in our stupid English minds by a parade of cleverness. Once a man in this country gets away with it by capitalizing his cleverness he soon finds himself subject to mysterious underground influences tending to prevent a repetition of the offence. It was such an untraceable whispering campaign, of which he spoke to me on several occasions, that pursued him after the War. Many who burrowed at his foundations were former friends. People who had been most charmed by his smiling manner and silver voice were those most vituperative when the winter of friendship came. I feel he had not the facility for uniform charm of manner—for that mystic semblance of continued interest in other people's hopes and fears as well as his own. It is a failing of many lesser men.

It has been a common saying that Lloyd George should have retired with his War victory in 1918 and gone into honourable Elder Statesmanship. But he was then only fifty-five. Moreover, like all great artists, whether in politics or other spheres, he was either unable or unwilling

to identify any peak of achievement as final. The store of his genius was to him eternal. One could not but like him for this stubbornness even if it did suggest beating the wind when his fight was over. Certainly, because he was too young, and also because of the artistic temperament that can deceive itself, he could not regard the triumph of 1918 as the period of his powers. One feels he has been more or less in the wilderness ever since, side-tracked on his farm at Churt, left in contemplation of the ashes of achievement.

Yet he may see in them Great Occasions below whose level he never fell. In what I think was his secret fancy for a new Liberalism he came a little—but not long—before his time. I mean a Liberalism freed on the one hand from the harsh individualism among its wealthy privileged men, and on the other hand freed from the 'licence' of the masses to do just as they please in the name of democracy—a Liberalism with a little more 'interference' with the way of life of the individual at both ends; in short, a vaccination for our political system to give it immunity from the disease of Dictatorship. It is not tyranny, nor coercion, to put some degree of control over the anti-social impulses of many human beings, whether they be rich or poor, capitalists or workers.

My final and persistent impression of Lloyd George must be his vitality, the secret above all, I think, of his rise to world eminence. At the root of most genius like his lies a strong constitution, the ability despite the clock to go on with that extra bit of drive. The fact that he was always able to go to sleep when he liked was an important factor in the conservation of the mental and physical strength he was able to conjure up at any time when needed. Even when in later days he entered the bleak country of political twilight he showed a vigour with his pen which might be the envy of any author. Where is there another man, having turned seventy, who could get down to the concentrated energy necessary for writing millions of words of memoirs and special articles, making a new reputation as a writer, as well as, I hope and believe, a new fortune? He had never written a complete book before, and from whatever angle

one looks at his literary achievements in these later years, they must be set down as a remarkable and brilliant performance. Not only in writing, however, did he show great vitality, but also in farming, as the successes attending his agricultural enterprises at Churt bear witness.

CHAPTER II

Cadburys and 'The Daily News'—The 'End of the Corridor'—A Dinner with Lloyd George—Asquith Leaves the Liberal 'Bridge'—Duel for Leadership.

An imposing array of tall hats and morning coats honoured my arrival in the camp of newspaper Liberalism when I met my new directors in July 1926. It was at a luncheon in a small hotel near Fleet Street. My embarrassed exaltation at what I took for a silk-hatted compliment to the occasion was rudely deflated when I learned this was the day of the Royal Garden Party; and, as one of the younger and more flippant Cadburys put it, 'the backwoodsmen from Bourneville have emerged for the annual airing of their finery'.

The luncheon was one of those pleasantly inconsequential mixings of small-talk like all occasions of finding one's way into a new world. People walk round and inspect each other with that correct and guarded inquisitiveness of strange dogs at first meeting. We all sniffed around and found everything in the garden lovely. The nearest thing to a political talk was the sly rap at the Australian tariff which the leonine veteran Ernest Parke could not resist making to a fresh arrival from that country. If among that assembly of Cadbury might and power who had gathered to inspect me I scented any friendly leanings towards politicians it was towards Asquith, who, shortly after he had become the Earl of Oxford and Asquith a year before, had, along with T. P. O'Connor, placed a corner-stone in the new *Daily News* building in Bouverie Street. For this he apparently stood high in the good books. We talked of this new building and I was surprised when a suggestion of mine that it should be named 'Dickens House', after the man who had founded the *Daily News* eighty years before, was received with polite coolness. The keynote of things was to be the future, not the past, and Dickens, I gathered, suggested mustiness and a straining after prestige. One bold individual told me the paper had been long enough on the sacrificial altar of prestige and must now strike out for a

big sale on modern lines. What irony that only a year or so had to pass before our most serious rival (the *Daily Herald*) ran off with our Dickens and turned him into a free-gift stunt which we and the other 'popular' papers had to follow helter-skelter!

Soon after the luncheon the tall hats and morning coats drifted away to the Buckingham Palace lawns, and I proceeded to Bouverie Street. Passing through the swing doors I made a mental note to find out if Chesterton and Belloc had ever been able really to get into the office that way—or did they go to some more accommodating side entrance? Tom Curtis, the general manager, who seemed to share my views on the publicity value of the Dickens association, told me the actual chair that Dickens had used as editor of the *Daily News* in 1846 was lying in the storerooms. I suggested it should be repaired and brought to light. The idea thrilled the usually prosaic Tom. He asked if I would care to have the chair for my own use. Care to have it? Care to sit in Dickens's actual editorial chair? I became as excited about it as the other Tom. He dug out the chair from the depths of the lumber-room and brought it to me. I suggested it should be carefully overhauled by an expert and that a simple brass plate should be put on it so that posterity might identify this historic bit of journalistic furniture. These things were eventually done and Dickens's chair had a place of honour in my room. But this is anticipating events.

At the start, as managing editor, I busied myself mainly at the task of tightening up the news organization, studying the staff at work, planning a new dress for the paper. The actual contents I left for the time being to the attention of others. I might with more comfort to myself have continued on this course, but inevitably the time came when I had to get down to the news itself. It was then that I had to take new bearings. Once I put my nose among the news I could not escape the smell of politics. I knew where it came from. A new-comer to an office, especially when he is a new broom, finds no lack of people ready to inform him on matters of office lore, of Who's Who and What's What, of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, of this and that 'influence'. In this way, and with the aid of

my own observations, I was amused to learn of the awe in which a certain portion of the office known as 'the end of the corridor' was held by the rank and file. Here sat the pundits of political policy ('with their pipe-line to Lloyd George' suggested one informer). They wrote the leading articles and emerged furtively at intervals during the evening to pontificate on the method of treating this or that morsel of political news. They attended, or missed, the main evening news conference as they felt inclined. In any case they always held an exclusive conference of their own, a 'Holy of Holies' into which no mere news man dared poke his nose. What mumbo-jumbo went on in that watertight compartment was only for the ears of those entrusted with the political direction of the paper. Timid members of the staff gave me friendly warnings to be careful of this or that member of the political 'cell'. It is an amusing reflection as I write that the man I was warned most against by the office rabbits became my greatest friend, the brilliant A. J. Cummings, whom later on I was to appoint Political Editor and give my complete confidence. Others in the cave were Stuart Hodgson, a kindly man and excellent leader-writer, and Robert Bernays, an astute journalist-politician of ambition and great promise, who later embarked on a Parliamentary career. I did not blame them for accepting the atmosphere of super-importance in which an antiquated system invested them. I enjoyed the legends that had grown up around the 'end of the corridor'. There were tales of Masterman; of heroics of leader-writing performed in years gone past by one Gordon Hewart (now Lord Chief Justice); of A. G. Gardiner sweating in his shirt-sleeves as he penned his slashing attacks on Northcliffe. Around these cavemen had grown up a legend of dragon-fighting—always they seemed to be seeking dragons for slaughter. Their zeal for attack seemed to me often to lead them to needless nagging, or, as J. A. Spender once put it to me, a constant quest for 'something to be angry about'.

Despite more modern rooms in the new building the political cavemen had preferred to remain in the high-ceilinged old-fashioned quarters, with a bust of George

Cadbury as sentinel at the entrance. The 'end of the corridor' displayed no lack of friendliness to me, but I could not suppress a feeling that this little junta eyed me as an interloper likely to become a nuisance, especially when I began to make playful inquiries about the 'Lloyd George pipe-line'. I had up to now made no approach to Lloyd George myself. One day Hodgson asked me if I would care to meet him at a little private dinner. I mentioned this to Henry Cadbury. His reply bemused me. He told me the fable of the spider and the fly. I felt that meant I should look out. I went to the dinner wearing a mental armour. It was at the time when Liberalism was at a milestone of leadership. Asquith (Lord Oxford) with whom Lloyd George had definitely parted company after the General Strike of 1926, was said to be seeking the peace of retirement from leadership. It was obvious the Lloyd George dinner had been arranged for an occasion. Here is the account of the evening from my diary:

October 14th 1926. To-night dined with Lloyd George—with C. F. G. Masterman, J. Hugh Jones, Stuart Hodgson, and Colonel Tweed (Ll.G.'s organizer). Just before we left the office news came through of Lord Oxford and Asquith's resignation from the Liberal leadership. The dinner was in the Chinese room at the Hotel Metropole —black carpeted, red papered. Lloyd George was late. We had not dressed. He came in wearing a black coat and bow tie. His shape is like no other man, big square body with legs looking too frail to carry it. He put me on his right and I had good opportunity of studying him —his shock of white hair, his curiously merry twinkling eye, the large mouth and the wrinkles which make him such easy prey for caricaturists. Could not help thinking as I looked at him of the War and this man's mighty efforts: and now what a lonely figure he seemed, on this rather vital night, entertaining a few humble newspapermen, while all the world was talking of him and Asquith, and whether his fortunes were to lead him to the Liberal leadership. 'I'm not sure whether we have met before,' he said to me. 'We met on the telephone during the

War,' I said, 'when I was at the *Daily Mail*.' He laughed. I suppose his mind had flashed back for a second to those exciting days when the talk in Carmelite House corridors was of Northcliffe and Lloyd George being 'thick as thieves'. Although I am now entering Lloyd George's magic intimate circle with a powerful Liberal paper as passport, I have a feeling there was momentary suspicion in his eye and bearing. I told him I was as much surprised to find myself where I was as he was to see me there. His mind, I think, went back to the famous quarrel with Northcliffe. He must have remembered where my loyalties had rested in the matter. However, he wasn't going to bring that up again. He turned to Masterman, who is obviously his chief lieutenant and adviser in this stormy passage to leadership. Masterman was very bitter about Asquith, though he said he had just come from writing him up for the *Sunday Express*. There was much talk during the evening about what Lloyd George's line should be in his speech at Barnstaple on the following day. He asked us all in turn to give our advice. He asked me about Australia and I told him that the outlook there was nearer to Liberalism than to Toryism, and that if he appealed for Liberal unity he ought to stress the fact, that with the Imperial Conference delegates here, the eyes of the Empire were on us. He would have a world audience on the morrow and he ought to say how bewildered the overseas folk were at this party squabble, and that it would be a good thing if the Premiers could return with the news of Liberal unity. 'Draft me those ideas and send them to me and I will put them in my speech.' [*Note*: I did, but they were not reported in the Press, and Lloyd George later sent me a message that he had used my remarks, but even my own paper had left them out.] We talked a lot of Australia. I said he should go there. He said it was too far and would take too much time. He asked about Billy Hughes (Australia's war-time Welsh Prime Minister) and told one or two stories about him. Once during the War, when Lloyd George was War Minister, he told the War Office to send out an S O S to the Dominions for

more men. They drafted a very special message to Australia and showed it to Lloyd George. It was to Hughes and it 'hoped the appeal would not fall on deaf ears'. (*Hughes was very deaf.*) Lloyd George was horrified and altered the wording. He told of Hughes at the Peace Conference discussing mandates, when Hughes did not favour a certain proposal. President Wilson turned his icy eye on him, and, with all the high moral tone of which he was capable, said: 'Am I to understand, then, that if the whole civilized world—the whole civilized world—says it is essential in the interests of humanity and world peace and happiness that these cannibal islands should be under the League of Nations mandate—am I to understand that Australia—that you—would set yourself against that verdict of the whole civilized world?' Hughes, head on hand and ear-trumpet box near, 'Well, that's about it.' Even Wilson, said Lloyd George had to smile. For that settled it, he said. There was nothing more to be said. Clemenceau, said Lloyd George, laboured under the delusion that the Australians were some sort of cannibals. Hughes was presented to him by Lloyd George. Said Clemenceau, 'So you are the cannibal.' 'No,' replied Hughes, 'that is a gross exaggeration.' Clemenceau took Hughes to his heart at once. Many quite piquant stories were told which Lloyd George enjoyed as much as any one else. But always coming back to, 'Well, what about this meeting to-morrow?' Once or twice during the evening 'phone messages were received from Glasgow, reporting the plans for Asquith's meeting to-night and the reception at Glasgow and *en route*. Lloyd George had his 'spies' out everywhere, it seemed. I got the impression that he badly wanted to be leader of a united Liberal Party. I asked him about Labour—'No. A Liberal I was born and a Liberal I die. I will not join Labour.'

Meantime the 'political situation' at Bouverie Street as it affected myself was coming to a climax. For some time I had not bothered my head about it. I was all too busy with the technical problems of news organization, with the task

of changing the physical appearance of the paper, typographically and in make-up. I had to fight every inch of the ground. Diehards would bob up and run to see the directors about every little change I made. I would laugh and wonder about that 'free hand'. Henry Cadbury loyally backed me up. During this time the 'cavemen' down the corridor went their serene way; but when I got a breathing-space from technical things I saw clearly that, under modern newspaper conditions, that 'watertight compartment' would have to go. All the friendship and goodwill in the world could not prevent friction or the growth of a spirit making co-operation difficult. I marvel that I tolerated as long as I did my personal exclusion, although I was Managing Editor, from the super-conference of the political pundits. Eventually the storm broke—and it broke over the person of Lloyd George.

One who had warmly supported my advent in Bouverie Street was J. Hugh Jones, a man of high character and ability whose name will long be revered as the pioneer of 'wireless for hospitals'. He had been my immediate predecessor as managing editor. Now he held a roving commission as editorial director and he was chief backer of my plans for the modernizing of method, and simplification of control. We began to put our heads together about this 'end of the corridor' business and the threatened lack of co-ordination that went with it, not as any one's deliberate act, but as a fault inherent in the system. Jones had worried about it until he had become ill. He had not been brought up as a news executive and he did not wish to put himself in a position where he might find himself without valid reply to an attack on his qualifications to criticize. I considered I suffered no such disability. I said there was only one thing to do—assert oneself. For that I had been paid to return all the way from Australia. So I knew I had Jones at my back when I got out my blue pencil and sharpened it for the attack.

There is no weapon so powerful as the Blue Pencil. As I began studying the proofs of the paper I saw things now and then going through which I did not wish to see in the editorial columns for which I considered myself responsible.

One night early in 1927 I spotted something which I felt I must delete or alter. It appeared to me to be merely a kite-flying paragraph, intended for our 'gossip' feature. That was sacred ground and the night editor said the 'end of the corridor' would raise trouble if I tampered with the paragraph.

'Leave that to me,' I said.

I found the 'end of the corridor' out at supper. So, without waiting further, I struck. I struck good and hard with my sharp blue pencil. I went home leaving a note for the 'end of the corridor' explaining why I had deleted part of the paragraph, and requesting that such matter should be submitted to me in the future.

The fat was in the fire. Next day Cummings, a strong personality and a courageous fighter, gave me the full weight of his indignation. I admitted the bluntness of my attack. I was sorry I had had to do it that way, but I asked him to look at my side of the picture. If I took responsibility and the ensuing kicks or approval, I must take authority too. He saw my point. We became from that moment the firmest of friends and in the years that followed he helped me as much as any one in discharging the task I had been set at Bouverie Street. He saw the meaning of my aspirations for treating politics as news, not only as propaganda. If there be any man I would like to have as my editor, and would be proud to work under him, it is Cummings.

That was not quite the end of the matter. The paragraph had been in some way concerned with the political situation. I forget its purport. Our political correspondent, a most able and shrewd man named Griffiths, came to see me in some agitation with the news that he had received a telephone message that Lloyd George was angry about something and wanted Griffiths to go down to him at once and explain. Griffiths was a great stickler, and very properly so, for the rights of the working journalist, and he objected to being ordered 'on the carpet' by anybody to whom he felt he was not answerable. Besides he had not been responsible for the paragraph or its alteration. I told him to ignore the message. I told him if he were telephoned to

again to say that the proper person to whom representations should be made was the editor.

'So I have your authority to decline to go down to Lloyd George's office,' said he.

'You certainly have,' I replied.

Soon afterwards I received through Hodgson an invitation to go to a dinner at the 1920 Club at the Hotel Victoria. Colonel Tweed, one of Lloyd George's right-hand men, met me in the reception-room and drew me aside saying, 'Lloyd George wants to meet you.'

The great man at that moment swept up, smiled benignly, shook a finger at me and said, 'You have been a very naughty boy,' and disappeared before I could answer.

I turned to Tweed and asked what he meant. Tweed smiled blandly as if to say, 'You should know.'

I said to Tweed, 'If he is referring to the Griffiths incident you had better tell him that I am not in the mood for argument. I want to be friendly with Lloyd George, but that will be difficult if these things happen.'

Tweed, as sensitive to atmosphere as his chief, saw to it, I suppose, that Lloyd George and I did not again cross paths that night. Perhaps I was rather too touchy in those days.

Not long afterwards, in February 1927, J. Hugh Jones died, and I lost my chief supporter in the 'end of the corridor' battle. I was, however, greatly fortified to receive about this time a letter from Edward Cadbury, head of Bournville and of The Daily News Trust expressing approval of the 'great energy you are putting into the paper' and of my loyal support for his brother Henry, then Managing Director. This was soon translated into something more concrete and I was appointed a director. This meant a further advance into the political jungle. I began to resign myself to the inevitable.

In the New Year of 1928 I visited Lancashire. I met many old friends, mostly Liberals I had known since boyhood. They were downcast about the parlous state of the party and the bad organization in the constituencies. When I returned to London I wrote the news of this and published a 'Wake up, Liberals' letter. Then I persuaded Lloyd George and Sir Herbert Samuel both to write follow-up

articles. It was perhaps wrong of me not to inform either of them that the other was writing. It never occurred to me to do so. I was still the simple news man, unversed in the jealousies of politics. My diary tells to what my innocence led.

January 1928. Samuel weighed in first with his article and I arranged to publish it on the Saturday. Lloyd George was late in agreeing to write and wanted his article to go in on Monday. Went with Bernays to see him at Old Queen Street one wet evening. We met in a spacious room very tastefully furnished, and I said to Lloyd George that I ought to tell him Herbert Samuel was also writing and that his article would go in on Saturday and Lloyd George's on Monday. Lloyd George blazed up. He rose from his chair and stormed up and down the room. 'I will not follow Herbert Samuel or anybody. This, you must understand, is my last message before I start my Mediterranean cruise. If you do what you say I will send my article to the *Daily Express*, who will be glad to have it.' I wanted to tell him to go to the *Express* and blazes at the same time, but I counted ten and tact won. We really could not afford to let the *Express* get any of our Liberal thunder, so I waited and waited and kept silence while he paced the floor. At length he cooled down. Rising to go, I said, 'Of course we will do as you wish. I came here to be candid. Your attitude proves I was right. What a mess and a quarrel we should have had later had I not told you about Samuel's article.' We had to get Herbert Samuel to postpone his article. 'I understand,' he said suavely. 'It is immaterial to me when the article appears.' He was Lloyd George's guest at dinner that same evening.

CHAPTER III

Swallowing the 'Westminster Gazette'—Newspaper Rivalries —The King and the 'Daily News'—Lloyd George and the Death of Lord Oxford—Lord Cowdray Takes a Hand—The Red Light for Lloyd George?—Bernard Shaw Interlude— Pulling the Editor's Leg.

SHORTLY after this, the then Lord Cowdray, finding, I suppose, his *Westminster Gazette* an expensive luxury, allowed that paper to be fused with the *Daily News*. It was the first round to us in the battle of the three London Liberal papers for supremacy. Lloyd George must have watched this development with feelings as mixed as those of some of us in Bouverie Street. It must be remembered that he had a soft spot for his ever-loyal mouthpiece, the *Daily Chronicle*, with which paper he had close relationship, and I had no illusion that we of the *Daily News* had him 'in our pocket', even had we desired it. We were, in fact, keen rivals of his pet paper, and, after the *Westminster* fusion, the talk among us of the *Daily News* was on the lines of 'Now for the *Daily Chronicle*'. Whether our success and growing sale-power had put up our journalistic stock with Lloyd George, or whether he was anxious about our policy now that Cowdray was associated with us, I do not know. The passing of the *Westminster Gazette* as a separate organ was probably no great disappointment to him, but it was no secret that Cowdray had an immense dislike for Lloyd George and all his works, and it may be that Lloyd George wondered if such dislike would now be reflected in the fused paper. Anyhow he seemed to creep into our picture more frequently. I had my doubts about policy under the new régime and wondered whether I was going to be 'mucked about' or allowed to continue urging a vigorous Liberalism independent of personal rivalries. After I had made my peace with the 'end of the corridor' things had settled down. We aimed at giving all the news of political Liberalism without fear or favour of people high or low. I had found satisfaction in that policy—watching with amusement how my opposite numbers on the *Westminster*

Gazette and *Daily Chronicle* had to dance respectively to the tunes called by the Asquithians or the Lloyd Georgians. Now that the Asquithians had joined us I smelt complications, and, of course, I smelt right.

Turning for the moment from the political to the ordinary journalistic rivalries within the Liberal camp, we thought the *Daily Chronicle*, now the only political competitor in our field, and most ably edited by G. A. Perris, had stolen a march by getting Lord Reading, a great figure-head, as chairman. His was a fleeting spell in Fleet Street, but it gave that paper all the publicity fillip that a titled ornament brings. Our owners were Quakers. Least of all folk are they title-hunters, so we had no reply in the same coin, but I looked upon our getting permission to use the Royal Arms that same year in the *Daily News* title-page as more than compensation. It came about this way. I had long wondered why certain papers, not more loyal than ours, even if we were Liberal, had the privilege of using this emblem of Royal approval on their front pages, so I wrote to the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Cromer). He referred me to the Home Secretary (Mr. Joynson-Hicks). I had known 'Jix' in his North-west-Manchester days when he gave Winston Churchill the political knock-out. I went to see him at the Home Office one morning in October 1927. I remember his showing me a little chart over the mantelpiece with red and black markings against people's names. It was his list of condemned men and the dates of execution. The red lettering, I think he said, indicated a reprieve. He said he looked at that sinister schedule every morning. It haunted him. But I had not come to talk about such gruesome things. Sir William (as he then was) asked me why I had come to ask for permission to use the Royal Arms. I said we thought it would improve the look of our paper, and that we felt we ought to be on the same footing in relation to the monarchy as papers like *The Times*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Express*. We were not less loyal than they. He told me I had raised a matter of considerable interest and difficulty; that he was not aware that the Home Office had ever granted permission to newspapers to use the Royal Arms. It appeared that the custom had started about

one hundred years ago, but he knew of no authority for it, then or now. I said if that was so the *Daily News* could do the same thing. Could he, if I did that, give me an assurance that the Home Office would raise no objection afterwards—something to protect us from proceedings? He said he would like to think it over. He asked me to call again at the Home Office a week later. I did so and he said he had seen the King, who read our paper, and liked it. Indeed, the King had been very pleased to hear about our request and had readily agreed that the *Daily News* should have permission to use the Royal Arms in the title. He said he could not put anything in writing, but he gave me verbal assurance that we were at liberty to use the Royal Arms, and if we were challenged—well, we could take it it would be all right. When I said that might be so as long as he was Home Secretary, he smiled and said, 'In matters like this there is continuity of policy at the Home Office,' but as I was coming away he strode to the door with me and said, 'By the way, if I were you I wouldn't make a big fuss about this. If you do I shall probably have others papers coming to see me—perhaps the *Daily Chronicle*—and I don't want to have Lord Reading coming round here asking for the same privilege, as I don't want to give it him.' I thought I had better not let Lloyd George hear that concerning his pet *Daily Chronicle.*

There was a curious little reaction from some of our readers when the Royal Arms first appeared on the *Daily News* front page on Monday, 21st November, 1927. We deliberately refrained from calling attention to the change, but in a day or two letters began to arrive, some in appreciation, some in sorrow, some even in anger. The writers wanted to know the reason for our monarchical flag-flying. The correspondence, while not heavy, grew to such an extent that I had a special letter printed to forward to all inquirers and this is what it said:

> 'In reply to your letter the custom of using the Royal Arms in newspapers is one of long standing which the *Daily News* feels itself not less entitled to adopt than any other newspaper.

To return to the 'marriage' of ourselves with the *Westminster Gazette*. That event took place in February 1928. I hope it will not be considered churlish if I say that we in Bouverie Street considered ourselves as the strong masculine partner and that we were not much impressed with the bride. The marriage ceremony was not particularly thrilling. It was a 'secret wedding' without ceremony or fuss. We felt the bride brought no great *dot*. Our circulation men thought that perhaps Lobby Lud, the mysterious gentleman who had been used by the *Westminster Gazette* to increase circulation by giving away seaside guineas to people who caught him after a chase, might be of some help, but others of us thought it no glittering wedding present.

I shall never forget my Lords Cowdray and Dalmeny coming to our first Board meeting. It was the custom for directors to take luncheon together in a small room in the office after the meeting. Hitherto these had been strictly teetotal affairs, but Cowdray brought to us the more worldly atmosphere of the West End and the polo field, and I, considered one of the most worldly of the *Daily News* Board, was delicately invited to look after him in the matter of refreshment. I was not surprised when his reply to my invitation was, 'I like a whisky and soda'. So the long tradition was broken, and whisky and soda it was for the noble lord. The rest went on with their tonic water and ginger ale. I remember, as we sat there, making reference to Lloyd George. Cowdray smiled and looked down his nose. He could not have revealed to me any plainer his contempt. It left no doubt in my mind as to what would be expected of me in regard to the Welshman. I made a point of saying that it was idle to pretend that you could keep Lloyd George down or out of the news. Cowdray again smiled and looked up at the ceiling.

My Fleet Street friends twitted me on at last having secured titular adornment for my staff. At a lunch at the Carlton, R. D. Blumenfeld, editor of the *Daily Express*, congratulated me on my new figure-head, Lord Cowdray.

'A title is what the *Daily News* has lacked,' he chaffed. 'I ran the *Express* for years without success until I got hold

of Beaverbrook. When the *Express* was run by R. D. Blumenfeld, who cared? But people sat up and listened when they heard about Beaverbrook. You should use Cowdray. He should be your best reporter. Think of a contents bill—"Cowdray on Petrol"—that would be a seller for you.'

I may as well put it on record here that any hopes raised by Blumenfeld's flippant remarks were falsified by events. We got little or no news from Lord Cowdray or his associates. He didn't understand news. I don't suppose that side of the newspaper game interested him much. Once when he asked my help to secure publicity for the visit of our polo team to America, I said the best thing would be for him to act as our correspondent with the team and send signed articles. He was horrified. He eventually agreed he might be able to help a little in sending us items if we would not bring his name in. I told him that was useless; that the value of any report from him would be his name.

But if we got no news we got bothersome political polemics. I am not going into reasons for Cowdray's uncompromising attitude to Lloyd George. They may have been good ones, but I was always at a loss to understand why it was not seen that this undisguised hostility merely created a reaction in Lloyd George's favour among observers like myself who tried to be objective interpreters. I experienced a rising resentment when Cowdray, a man I liked in many ways for his *bonhomie* and breeziness, would say to me, with an unmistakable inflexion in his voice, '*Your* friend Lloyd George'. As time went on, while perfectly charming to talk to on all other matters, he was quite impossible on the subject of Lloyd George. The amusing thing is that up to then Lloyd George had given me no particular reason to prefer his politics or his company to any other of the strange bedfellows of Liberalism. It was this stiffnecked attitude of others that sent him and me closer together. It is true that perhaps some of us understood Lloyd George's world and his background better than his aristocratic opponents did. I had come to look on him as one who understood, as I did, from actual experience in provincial and industrial Britain, the life of the working man, the bitterness of the

under-dog's struggle for existence. I am afraid as time went on I came to look on Lord Cowdray as representative of the moneyed and privileged classes and interested in the masses chiefly as voters at election times. The only difference between him and a good case-hardened Tory, as I saw it, became the label.

February 16th 1928. Lord Oxford died yesterday. I asked Lloyd George, among other eminent public men, for a message on the passing of the great statesman. This is the tribute we print to-day from him:

'I hear with the deepest regret of the death of Lord Oxford. I worked in the closest association with him for a great number of very eventful years. I served with him in a Campbell-Bannerman administration and under him in the administration of which he was the head, and I could wish for no better colleague or chief. On a solemn occasion like this I prefer to recall the days of our pleasant and, I think it could be admitted, fruitful association when we were working together for great causes. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest Parliamentarians of all time, and his classic eloquence will be a model as long as the English language survives.'

An incident occurred about this time, which, although it had nothing to do with political polemics, showed me in stark reality how I stood with Cowdray. Among the journalists who had come to us from the *Westminster Gazette* was that grand old man of the profession, J. A. Spender. Nothing I am about to say must be taken to imply anything but the highest personal regard for one of the outstanding figures of a journalism that, to the regret of most of us, has passed. He had been a great editor: he had conducted from 1896 to 1922 the old green *Westminster* with a distinction that was the envy of every journalist worth his salt, and when the former Lord Cowdray, who had run the *Westminster Gazette* as a political hobby, turned it into what I suppose he thought would be a more profitable morning paper, Spender had continued his association with it up to its fusion with the *Daily News.* Although Spender, had, I

feel, little relish for my style of news-hunting journalism, it would be untrue to say he ignored news in the pursuit of the higher-level political and personal journalism at which he excelled. He undoubtedly had a considerable following among Liberals (and Conservatives too) of his intellectual type and we could not afford to lose him as a writer, or them as readers. So he came on the staff of the fused paper and was regarded by us as the editorial apostle of the Cowdray camp. I went out of my way to create an adequate and dignified platform for him in our now popular-style paper, and I think he appreciated it.

Soon after the fusion he was doing some speaking here and there and I received several communications from friends and readers calling my attention to his observations—quite academic no doubt—on modern newspaper trends. They did not strike me or my friends as being particularly kind to modern journalism of what is called the 'popular' type. Our paper was aiming unashamedly at the big market. I told Spender so. I told him with North-Country forcefulness that I did not like his speeches. I was probably wrong to be so emphatic: but I was putting in about fourteen hours a day on a job the Cadburys had brought me 12,000 miles across the ocean to do; and I was doing what they wanted me to do and what I felt ought to be done, to bring success to their paper. I respected Spender's opinions but I felt that he ought not to air them in public while he was in our boat. Looking back I'm sorry I spoke roughly to him in the Bouverie Street corridor. The fat was in the fire. A day or so later Henry Cadbury, then Managing Director, invited me to walk on the roof with him, as was his custom when he had something 'on his mind'. This time that something was a demand from Lord Cowdray that an immediate apology should be presented by me to Spender. I was dumbfounded. That a director should encourage a member of the staff, however great his personal prestige, to go over everybody else's head about a domestic office matter; and furthermore, should without asking to hear the editor's side of the case, present him with an ultimatum for an apology, seemed so unjust, so illiberal and fantastic, that I told Cadbury he was wasting time talking to me and that he ought to tell Cowdray

to mind his own business. In no circumstances would I accept browbeating of that sort. Cadbury agreed at once, put his support of me in writing, and said he would see Cowdray. Judge my astonishment the following day when Cadbury sent for me to say that Cowdray was adamant.

'But he is not the owner of this show,' I said.

Cadbury then explained Cowdray's interests. The position was very awkward, he said.

'If that was a threat from Cowdray,' I said, 'it has no effect on me. I feel I am in the right, and I should be surprised if a Cadbury could bring me all the way from Australia and then expect me to sell my conscience even for a Cowdray. What is the alternative?' I inquired.

I knew from other sources that Cowdray had been in the office to examine the terms of my contract. My Lancashire blood was up—plus a little of the Irish too.

Cadbury had tears in his eyes. He would not face the alternative.

'Well then,' I said. 'I am not apologizing and I am not resigning. You know what to do.' I went off for a month's holiday. I'm sure it was the worry of all this business that cost me my appendix.

In the end things were patched up after we had all behaved like schoolboys. Spender and I met on neutral ground and shook hands. The incident had no importance in itself, or as between me and Spender. Our friendship remained unbroken. It had tremendous significance, however, in revealing the danger of my position amid possibly conflicting powers. I felt I had been warned by Cowdray. I felt the anti-Lloyd George faction had put me 'on the spot'. The effect on me may be imagined. I had seen my red light—and Lloyd George's too—for Cowdray looked on me as the Welshman's friend.

My periodic invitations to Lloyd George luncheons began to grow. There was one to meet Henry Ford.

April 17th 1928. I sat next to Henry Ford when he was chief guest at Lloyd George's luncheon at the House of Commons to-day. The other side of me sat Sir John

Simon. Ford is the dumbest table companion I've met for a long time—unless you'll talk farms and tractors; and then he's off like a waterfall. Didn't think he'd much sense of humour. Same goes for Simon. It was funny to listen to these two trying to get in tune over my body on some topic they could both understand, but as Ford wasn't interested in politics or law and Simon wasn't interested in motors and tractors, they just sniffed at each other with a few commonplace pleasantries and then withdrew into themselves. Simon's first contact effort was to ask Ford across my soup for the names of the rivals for the American Presidency. 'Now that's a thing I wouldn't know,' said Ford with a dash of scorn, 'I only know about tractors.' Simon looked huffed, as if Ford were laughing at the politicians. I took the cue from Ford, but I suppose I was too small beer for his one-track mind. A dull lunch on the whole. Lloyd George had got all the party pundits there. He reminded me of a cock-sparrow with his cutaway morning coat, bulging a bit, and so making his legs look fragile. Hair quite white. Lord Reading was there, also Sir Robert Hutchison, and Henderson of the *Nation* and Walter Layton (the economist). We were all shepherded by smiling Sylvester, Lloyd George's secretary, who seems the sort of chap never to get rattled. Wish I had his levelness.

I have promised the reader sidelights on other big figures besides Lloyd George. Let me now present George Bernard Shaw in his famous act 'Trying to Pull the Editor's Leg'. Of all the literary celebrities I have met Shaw remains the one I have understood least. Galsworthy as the interpreter of a social order of the past, Wells as the special prophet of the future, Bennett as the cocksure tradesman of literature, were easy. Their personalities and their philosophies were recognizable for classification. Shaw, however, marched on mockingly elusive. I came to think of him as a man always standing on his head to attract attention, a man of whose tricks the older generation had grown tired, and a man who had failed to get in tune with the new. Old age had brought him no sense of repose—no desire to give quarter

to those now growing grey after a lifetime trying to keep pace with him. I had had some correspondence with him. At least two letters he sent for publication never saw the light of day. They concerned cases before the courts, one criticizing a judge. Although Shaw had felt it a public duty to write them, I felt it my duty to submit these letters to our legal advisers, and they advised against publication unless we wished to be hauled before the courts for libel or contempt. Whether this failure to get his letters published had anything to do with what happened next, I do not know.

One morning in May 1928 I was perusing the pile of 'Letters to The Editor' which my assistant had reported as 'a dull lot'. After running through them idly I was inclined to agree. Then a pencilled anonymous letter attracted my eye. Hadn't I seen the handwriting before? The letter was about Dr. Serge Voronoff and his visit to London to spread his doctrine of rejuvenation by monkey-gland grafting. We had published various letters of protest from men of science, including one from Dr. Edward Bach, a distinguished English bacteriologist, asserting that the monkey-gland operation involved a grave risk to human beings because the transplantation of the glands of an ape must inevitably involve the transplantation also of the worst characteristics of the ape stock, not necessarily in the persons so operated on, but in their progeny. Dr. Voronoff had brusquely rejected this theory.

The 'anonymous' letter before me ran as follows:

DR. VORONOFF AND DR. BACH

To the Editor of the *Daily News*.

SIR,

On behalf of my fellow-guests of the Royal Zoological Society, I must protest warmly against the audacious statement by Dr. Edward Bach reported in your issue of last Saturday.

He declares first, that 'when the glands of an ape are grafted on to a human being, the characteristics of an ape are bound also to be transplanted', and, second,

that 'characteristics possessed in a high degree by the anthropoid ape are cruelty and sensuality'.

The implication is that apes are more cruel and sensual than human beings; and that an operation tending to raise a man to the level of an ape would make him crueller and more sensual instead of less so.

We apes are a patient and kindly race; but this is more than we can stand. Has any ape ever torn the glands from a living man to graft them upon another ape for the sake of a brief and unnatural extension of that ape's life?

Was Torquemada an ape? Were the Inquisition and the Star Chamber monkey-houses? Were 'Luke's iron crown and Damiens' bed of steel' the work of apes?

Has it been necessary to found a Society for the Protection of Ape Children, as it has been for the protection of human children? Was the late war a war of apes or of men? Was poison gas a simian or a human invention?

How can Dr. Bach mention the word cruelty in the presence of an ape without blushing? We, who have our brains burnt out ruthlessly in human scientists' laboratories, are reproached for cruelty by a human scientist!

And the moment chosen is one in which even the iron hearts of men have been moved to protest against the horrors of the Ouran Outang trade as reproducing all the barbarities of the old trade in human negroes! It is an insult not only to us, but to history and common sense.

We leave Dr. Voronoff to demonstrate to Dr. Bach how crudely unscientific is his fear—which ought to be a hope —that men can acquire the characteristics of apes by stealing their glands.

We ourselves are not concerned with what men call science except as mutilated victims; but we are concerned with experience. We perceive that vaccination and antitoxin inoculation have given to men neither the virtues of the cow nor the qualities of the horse.

Man remains what he has always been; the cruellest of all the animals, and the most elaborately and fiendishly sensual. Let him presume no further on this grotesque resemblance to us; he will remain what he is in spite

of all Dr. Voronoff's efforts to make a respectable ape of him.

Yours truly,
CONSUL JUNIOR

THE MONKEY HOUSE,
REGENT'S PARK,
May 26th 1928

As an anonymous letter without a covering card it had already narrowly escaped the waste-paper basket. But this was one of my lucky days. 'I'm sure that is Shaw's handwriting,' I said, 'and I'm sure that is Shaw's style. Let's compare it with some of his letters in our file.' We did. We examined the envelope. It was postmarked 'Sandwich, Kent'. There had been a paragraph in the Press that Shaw was spending a holiday in that district. I drafted a telegram to him saying we had received a letter which appeared to be in his writing and would he kindly confirm? The messenger boy was about to dispatch the telegram, when—my lucky day again—I got a hunch that Shaw would probably forbid our publishing the letter as coming from him. I tore up the telegram and plunged. We printed the letter next day in the 'splash' place on our main news-page, together with a facsimile reproduction of the handwriting: and the following heads and introduction:

MEN, WOMEN AND MONKEYS
MR. SHAW'S JOKE
MYSTERY LETTER FROM THE ZOO
DEFENCE OF THE APE

Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who is apparently in great form during his Whitsun holiday in Kent with Lord and Lady Astor, has taken the opportunity to perpetrate one of his richest jokes.

Yesterday the *Daily News* received a letter in pencil on the subject of Saturday's article, 'Men, Women, and Monkeys'. The letter purported to come from 'Consul

Junior'. (Consul was a performing chimpanzee of world-wide fame.)

The handwriting instantly suggested a comparison with that of G. B. S., with which the *Daily News* staff is very familiar; and investigation left no doubt in our minds that the letter came from Mr. Shaw. It is printed in full, exactly as received, below.

Readers of the *Daily News* will share our appreciation of the joke which Mr. Shaw's sunny disposition has prompted him to try on us, and will readily agree that he, in any case, does not require the Voronoff rejuvenation treatment.

The same day I wrote to Shaw as follows: 'Let me thank you for sending the letter which illumined this morning's *Daily News*, and at the same time ask your forgiveness for letting the cat out of the bag. I should like to think I'll meet you in person one day, soon. One thing I should like to ask you on that occasion is why your new *Guide to Socialism* has been addressed to women.'

He returned my letter with comments written on it—a favourite pastime of his. Alongside my suggestion that I would like to meet him, he put 'Why? All my goods are in the shop window.' To my question why his new book had been addressed to women he replied: 'Because experience proves that men are politically incorrigible.'

Some time after this I asked a reporter to ring up Shaw for his views on a matter then of public interest. The reporter failed and sent me this memorandum:

'Mr. Shaw said to me when I rang him up:

'"If I want to say anything about the ethics of this incident I shall write it in a considered way and not telephone it to the *Daily News*. If the *Daily News* will pay me £10,000 a year to be rung up about every dog-fight I will consider it. I did not make my reputation saying trivial things on the telephone. If I talk about every little thing then when I do say something valuable people will disregard it. What you want is to give a thing artificial value by saying it comes from me. You say it yourself and get the credit for it."'

CHAPTER IV

Lloyd George and the 1929 Election—Liberal 'Dog-fight'—Lady Oxford Shows her Rapier—Lloyd George Talks of Asquith and Northcliffe—Woman and Political Meetings—An Election Campaign Fails.

DURING 1928 and the early part of 1929 Lloyd George was busy organizing for the election of May 1929. I have notes of various luncheons with him, or receptions at Lord Beauchamp's place, where the talk inevitably turned on the coming election—perhaps the last chance for years for the Liberal Party. The Liberal Campaign Department, financed by Lloyd George's alleged Aladdin's Fund, was investigating new methods of propaganda. Headquarters at Old Queen Street, where Lloyd George sat in his brown leather chair in a luxurious oak-panelled room, buzzed with ideas. A pop-eyed and chivalrous little doctor from Dumfries who had never been heard of until Lloyd George snapped him up and persuaded him to leave Scotland to help with the Land and Nation League, had in two years become director of the Campaign Department, and was throwing tremendous energy into his task under the approving eye of his sponsor. At the time I met the redoubtable Dr. Hunter he had not yet suffered the disillusionment obviously coming to a sensitive man pitched for the first time into the political dog-fight at the age of fifty-one. Another new departure by Lloyd George was to send a secret deputation to the United States to study the latest election propaganda methods and pick up ideas for England.

The more I was drawn into the Liberal political turmoil the plainer it became that escape would be impossible. I had to make the best of it, and it seemed to me I ought to try and put our paper on good terms with the several factions and aim at appeasement and harmony among them. The Liberal rank and file had seen through the sham façade of unity. They were as weary of personal rivalries as were we in Bouverie Street. The only hope for the shattered party was to get practical common sense knocked into the heads of those who proclaimed their desire to mend it. First I

had to get to know them and try to make them friendly to our paper. Lloyd George had been comparatively easy, though I never felt he was completely incautious about me and my works. Something, I felt, ought now to be done about the Asquithians, still sullen, if occasionally waspish, observers of our newspaper enterprises.

Now that we had their views represented on the Board by Lord Cowdray and others, I felt it still more advisable for my own comfort, as well as in the interests of party unity, to try to break down their aloofness. I thought of Sir Herbert Samuel, but he seemed too remote in the alps of intellectualism for a rough and tumble journalist like me to tackle. I remembered Walter Layton (who later on was to take the helm in Bouverie Street) telling me of a conversation he had overheard in Samuelite quarters in which uncomplimentary references had been made to the 'poor old *Daily News*'. I suppose its new liveliness was not to the taste of these rather sombre people, but I told Layton how very much we ought to resent such remarks coming from people who displayed no great interest in our paper or in our efforts in the Liberal cause. I said they only seemed to cultivate us when they wanted to use us for dull propaganda.

My thoughts came to Asquith's widow—the Countess of Oxford and Asquith. I had never met her. I had been warned that, for some reason never explained to me, she did not appear to like us or our paper. I felt I ought to put that right. I knew she was a powerful influence behind some scenes of Liberal politics. I knew, of course, that Lloyd George was not one of her heroes. She had a racy pen. Margot Oxford was being read and discussed everywhere. I thought if I could get her to write, not necessarily on politics, it might put us at least on speaking terms with an important section of Liberalism, and help to bridge a gulf in our political territory. Bouverie Street liked my idea, but felt I should get a rebuff if I approached her. I took the risk. I wrote inviting her to contribute to a discussion in our columns to be led off by Judge Parry, on new legislation affecting husbands and wives. She replied swiftly and devastatingly—in pencil as she always wrote to

me. She took the opportunity of letting me see the glint of the rapier she held in readiness for Lloyd George.

44, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.1,
January 23rd 1929

DEAR SIR,

I am afraid I could never write for your paper. The cruel reporter who spread that my husband was paralysed when he had had a mild attack of rheumatism a year before he was even ill, matters little now. The Press needs reports of an untrue and sensational kind I am told to increase their circulation. What I do not forgive, is the *Daily News* calling his Lordship a traitor because he disapproved of a general strike which, with the exception of Mr. Lloyd George, every sensible man, Liberal and Tory, abhorred, and which made the Labour Party ridiculous. The *Daily News* thought—as the Labour leaders and Mr. Lloyd George did—that the general strike would be a success; and that public blackmail of that sort would unite the Labour and Liberal Party, and enable Mr. Lloyd George (with his vast fund) to beat the Tories. The Liberal rank and file and Liberal Press chose to support Mr. Lloyd George, but by doing this they have lost all that was fine, true, and moral, and *everything* that Liberalism meant to me.

Yours truly,
MARGOT OXFORD

That was a black eye for me. I replied as follows:

January 23rd 1929

DEAR LADY OXFORD,

I am sorry. As a comparative new-comer to the *Daily News* the events of the past to which you refer have never been in my mind. I was out of the country, 12,000 miles away, during the days of which you write, and I feel I must ask your forgiveness if my letter to you caused pain by reopening old wounds of which I knew nothing. All I knew was that there seemed a chasm between us which I felt I ought to try to bridge. I am sorry I have failed,

but I can understand and sympathize with your attitude even though I wish it were otherwise.

Yours,

TOM CLARKE

To this she replied:

44, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.1,
January 24th 1929

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

Thank you for your courteous letter. Our Poor Party can only profit by mistakes made by the other two Parties, and is in a sad condition. It has perished from lack of loyalty.

Yours,

MARGOT OXFORD

I had failed. It was more than a year before we got in touch again and the breach was healed between Lady Oxford and our paper. That between her people and Lloyd George was destined to widen, as will be seen, while we would-be peacemakers looked hopelessly on.

This rebuff, as might be expected, threw me back on to Lloyd George. I had already indicated he was easy in comparison with all the rest. I mean he was easy of approach and usually eager to accept the hospitality of our columns.

On March 1st 1929 he electrified the political atmosphere with a speech on unemployment. He said he would treat it like war, as a national emergency. He pledged the Liberal Party, if returned to power, to reduce the figures by 500,000 in one year without costing a penny. Next day we received a letter from a Fulham reader suggesting that the *Daily News* should take the Albert Hall for a great meeting to be addressed by Lloyd George. Henry Cadbury thought this was a grand idea. I went to see Lloyd George about it:

March 7th 1929. Two afternoons ago I went to see Lloyd George in his room at the House of Commons and killed two birds with one stone. One, got him to agree to a great Albert Hall meeting and possibly to others at

Edinburgh and Manchester, and to get loud-speakers installed. Two, got him to talk (as a *quid pro quo* for my help) about Winston Churchill's statement in his book published to-day that Lloyd George declined to have Asquith at the Peace Conference, the reason being that he feared to incur the anger of Lord Northcliffe. Naturally point two interested me more than point one: but point one had to be settled first. Got him to agree to Albert Hall meeting. Refused to listen to suggested thinking it over. There and then used his own 'phone to ring up Richards, our publicity man, to secure dates for the Albert Hall. I think that impressed him. Then, having got that out of the way, said I wanted a reply from him for my paper next day about this Churchill book. He hummed and hawed. I told him that Winston's statements might be very damaging to the Liberal cause on the eve of the election if they remained uncorrected. He agreed, and this is the essence of what appeared under my signature in the *Daily News* of to-day's date:

ASQUITH'S GREAT REFUSAL

Mr. Lloyd George authorized me yesterday to say that, far from having kept Mr. Asquith off the Peace Delegation, he had actually offered him a seat thereon before the 1918 election and the Lord Chancellorship at the same time. Mr. Asquith refused.

When Mr. Lloyd George's attention was called to Mr. Churchill's implication that Mr. Asquith was refused a place on the Peace Delegation, because Mr. Lloyd George feared Lord Northcliffe's anger, Mr. Lloyd George laughed.

'Why,' he said, 'when Northcliffe asked me to put him on the Peace Delegation I told him to go to Hell.

'Before the 1918 election, leaders of the Manchester Liberal Federation came to me, and said, "Is it not possible for the Liberals to go ahead as a united party?"

'They earnestly wanted to make an attempt to heal the breach before the election, and they said, "Our suggestion is that you should put Mr. Asquith in the Government."

'I said, "What sort of office?"

'They said, "Lord Chancellor."

'I said, "I should be only too happy as far as I am concerned. I must, of course, consult Mr. Bonar Law."

'I did. Bonar Law agreed. So I went back and said Mr. Asquith could have the Lord Chancellorship, and come to the Peace Conference as Lord Chancellor.

'The Manchester Liberals then asked for the inclusion in the Government of two or three of Mr. Asquith's colleagues. I agreed, and got Bonar Law to agree to take a number of his colleagues, including Mr. McKenna.

'Mr. Asquith refused the offer, and there was an end of it.

'He would have been in the whole settlement of the peace in a very exalted position as the Lord Chancellor of England, and would have carried great weight in the discussions. There would possibly have been at the Peace Conference Asquith, myself, and Balfour; then I would have put one Labour man in and also some one from the Dominions. That would have formed our delegation to the Peace Conference.

'It was the Manchester Liberal Federation who suggested that Asquith should go to the House of Lords.

'As for Lord Northcliffe and the Peace Conference, I told him to go to Hell. I broke with Northcliffe. I refused absolutely to have him at the Peace Conference.'

The morning after that I went as guest of the Admiralty aboard H.M.S. *Hood* to the tactical exercises in the Mediterranean. When I returned three weeks later Henry Cadbury took me for another walk on the roof at Bouverie Street. He told me Lloyd George's Albert Hall meeting, which had been held during my absence, had been a terrific success, and that when it was over Lloyd George had asked to see him. As I understood no Cadbury had been in the Lloyd George presence for donkey's years, I pricked up my ears.

'Did you go?' I asked Cadbury.

'Yes,' he said, 'and you will never guess what he proposed to me.'

'I'll buy it,' I said, fixing my eyes on St. Paul's in the distant blue haze to guard me against shock.

'Well, he wants *you*,' said Cadbury quietly.

'I don't understand,' I said.

Henry went on. 'He has asked me if our Board will release you to help organize the election for the Liberal Party.'

I heard later that one of the recommendations brought back by the scouts he had sent to the United States of America was that Lloyd George should appoint an 'organizer of victory', a man not necessarily a politician, but, what was more important, a man who knew publicity from all angles, a man who understood how to get under the skin of the public, a man who could put Liberalism and its personalities over without too much of the dry bones of doctrine, economics, and idealism. I was rather taken aback. I said there was nothing doing. I said I was a journalist, not a politician. I asked Henry Cadbury what his reply had been to Lloyd George. It was that he felt sure the Board would release me if I cared to accept the offer, which he would place before me.

'So you want me to accept?' I asked.

'I do not want to influence you one way or another. The paper can ill spare you—but—don't hurry your decision. Think it over. Sleep on it. Let me know to-morrow."

'It needs no thinking over as far as I am concerned,' I said. 'I am not taking it on. First of all, politics don't interest me enough. They are not my line. Secondly, if the Liberals win I shall get no credit; if they lose, I shall get the blame. Thirdly, the Liberals haven't the slightest chance of victory and I don't want to be "Organizer of Victory" for a side that can't win.'

And that was how I missed becoming Lloyd George's organizer of victory—for the victory that never came off.

It is curious that Lloyd George never mentioned this matter to me himself. When I saw him a few days later I expected him to say something about it, but he didn't. I went to see him with another proposal for advancing the Liberal prospects at the election, which would also provide me with a good news story. I told him that there would

be added to the register another 5,000,000 women voters and that he ought to go after them—flatter them by holding a special women's meeting in the grand style at the Albert Hall. I'm not sure that Lloyd George was warm to the idea. He is not at home among an audience of women, but he saw the propaganda value of it and agreed to come into line. I remember his thanking me for all our paper was doing. 'It has leapt at once to the forefront,' a diary note of mine records him as saying, 'and not since Gladstone's days has the *Daily News*, by its vigour and imagination, done so much for the Liberal cause.' He asked me to dine with him a few days later:

April 18th 1929. A good dinner with Lloyd George to-night in the Chinese room at the Hotel Metropole. Present also McCurdy, Henderson (of the *Nation*) Colonel Tweed, and Sylvester. Lloyd George put me on his right. He went through the speech he is to broadcast to-morrow. Said he wanted to reply to the Tory boast that 'a vote for the Liberals is a vote for the Socialists' because, they argued, the Liberals had put the Socialists in power in 1924 and would do so again. He proceeded to read to his guests his speech. It was to the effect that Liberals did not promise any support to the Tories in 1924. We urged Lloyd George not to raise this question in his speech. He said: 'These statements are doing us damage. Suppose we get 100 seats, or even 80 (the shrewd Tweed would give the Liberals no more than 70 seats) and the Socialists get 235, there will then be a vote of confidence and I shall put the Tories out.'

I said, 'Then the King will send for Macdonald.'

Lloyd George: I shall claim that he should send for the Liberal leader too. He should send for the leaders of all parties.

Me: Supposing Ramsay objects.

Lloyd George: A royal request—he can't. The King is too much respected and the country would stand behind him.

At a later stage, Lloyd George said if in such case the King did not send also for the Liberals, thereby revealing

a Tory court, he (Lloyd George) would come out boldly and say so. 'I would not have it,' he snapped. 'I say that in all seriousness.'

He went on to talk of Bonar Law shortly before he died: 'We were staying at Max's (Lord Beaverbrook's) place. Bonar Law was obviously dying. He talked of the cares of his office as Prime Minister and said that two things he regretted: "Two things were wrong, disastrously wrong —one, going in the Ruhr, two, Baldwin's settlement with America of the War Debts question.'

Lloyd George was driving home with usual vivacity some other point in his argument when McCurdy interrupted him. Lloyd George turned sharply, and said, 'As Dan Leno used to say, "I am not arguing with you, I am telling you".'

He asked me what I thought of his broadcast speech. I said, 'I am a journalist, not a politician. I think I know a bit about publicity. You will have a fireside audience, mostly of women. Drop politics, drop talking of the Socialists and who will or will not put them in power, and talk to them in the homely way you do so well and bring in your unemployment scheme that way.' He went home saying, 'Well, thank you, gentlemen, for having made a nice mess of the speech I had prepared. I don't know now what I shall say. It is a terrible business, this speaking; I feel miserable at having to do it. It is all right once I start. One gets carried on by the sense of action, but I loathe starting.' He spoke of the forthcoming meeting for women we were arranging at the Albert Hall. He had never really liked the idea. 'I do not like women's audiences,' he went on. 'Another thing' (with a twinkle in his eyes), 'at this women's meeting I am afraid I can't let Megan (his daughter) take the chair as you suggest. Not only would that be too much of a family affair, but the people come to hear me and I am not going to have any competition even from my own household.'

Friday, May 9th 1929. 'Women of Britain' meeting at the Albert Hall to-night. Nancy Samuel in the chair. 9,500 present. Lloyd George, who reminded me how he

disliked addressing women's audiences, told me in the 'artists' room' before he went on that he was all nerves until he went on the platform.

Dr. Betty Morgan moved a resolution. Mrs. Wintringham forgot her three minutes' allowance and went on for nine. In Lloyd George's car as we drove to his town house (Dwyfor House) in Addison Road (by the way women came to touch him and press for his autograph as he slipped from the Albert Hall to his car) he said, 'As a meeting it was a fine demonstration, but I never felt I had them. Those women listened intently, as they do in church or chapel where they cannot demonstrate. Women are not used to political meetings. You could not hear their interruptions.'

We fixed up for Lloyd George to speak at Swansea as well as at Cardiff next Friday by using a special train.

Our talk came round to Northcliffe and Lloyd George's tribute to him recently at the opening of a new Newcastle evening newspaper office. He said of Northcliffe, 'Yes, I put up with him for four years. It had to come—the row—when he wanted to dictate to me. As Prime Minister I could not have it. Max (Beaverbrook) tried it, too, once. Northcliffe thought he could run the country. I could not allow that. It was a good thing for me that I didn't get turned out while he was alive, or he would have claimed he had done it. I was with Poincaré when news came of Northcliffe's death. It was a great blow to him. It moved him. It was as if a big support had been swept away. Northcliffe was a great man, but one could not allow him to dominate the Prime Minister.'

Before I left, Lloyd George said that by its demonstrations the *Daily News* had got thoroughly in the ascendancy over the *Daily Chronicle*, and he had told Harrison (chief owner of the *Daily Chronicle* at that time) so. 'I told Harrison he had missed the chance and that you had seen it and seized it.'

I went to Lloyd George's meetings at Cardiff and Swansea. We brought him down from North Wales, where he had been resting, in a special train. Our newspaper's publicity circus

had been placed at the disposal of his lieutenants, and had worked up great public enthusiasm in South Wales. Lloyd George spoke brilliantly to overflowing meetings at Cardiff and worked them all up to great emotional scenes. The special train then whisked him off to Swansea to address more meetings before he went to bed. He had a private saloon. A couch had been placed in it, the blinds drawn and the doors closed at each end to all except one or two privileged people. Immediately Lloyd George got aboard he hurried to the couch and went to sleep. It was then I confirmed one of the secrets of his vitality. He can and does command sleep at any time, anywhere. Despite the excitement of those Cardiff meetings he relaxed into his cushions, turned down the lights, and while we other tired ones fortified ourselves with champagne and chicken sandwiches, he snoozed away on his back during the whole journey to Swansea. Several times I passed quietly through the saloon to other parts of the train. I did not see him move an eyelid—lying there with chubby hands folded across his chest. He had left instructions that we should awaken him five minutes before Swansea. When we did so he was fresh as a daisy.

Our hectic campaigning, although producing good 'copy', came to very little political result. Liberalism got no joy out of that 1929 election. I remember a feverish night at Selfridge's, listening to the first results. London's celebrities were there in droves for what was a social occasion with a very nice supper thrown in by the generous Mr. Selfridge. Most of the banqueters seemed to be Tories, but they got little more pleasure out of the figures flashed on the results boards than the Liberals. The tale was of Tory defeat after Tory defeat, and the seats the Tories lost went to the Socialists, whose tide was rising vigorously. They secured 288 seats; the Tories 267 and the Liberals a miserable 59 (20 fewer than the most modest hopes of Lloyd George). In this so-called 'last fight', the Liberal unity had merely been a façade of unity. I have seen it stated by Socialist Mr. Attlee that at the election 'Liberalism was temporarily united by a common distrust of their leader'. One has to confess there were few signs of real unity behind the scenes.

I remember being chivvied by leaders of rival sections who wanted to run in our paper this line or that line, most of them quite at variance with each other. I remember the gymnastics performed in our editorial columns when it came to advising Liberals how to vote in constituencies where there was a Tory opposed only by a Socialist. I remember one day our editorial columns giving advice in direct opposition to that tendered by Lord Cowdray in a letter published the same day. You paid your penny and you took your choice.

After the election came this interesting speculation: what were the Liberals to do with their handful of votes in the House of Commons? It was obvious that the Socialist's position would be precarious unless they had the support, or at least the benevolent neutrality, of the Liberals. The feeling among some Socialists I met was that they should try to secure a working agreement with the Liberals, but I am afraid the rank and file of Socialism were not very keen on that, and there was also the prospect of opposition in the Liberal camp from the Simonites. So, although Lloyd George appeared to hold the key, it was one that might be difficult to turn in the lock. I tried to get some guidance from him on this delicate problem, but, as far as I was concerned, he had retired into his shell with defeat. Despite all our comradeship in the trenches in the actual fight, I could not get out of him a line about his policy now that victory had eluded him. He went to Churt, where I imagined him sitting in the sulks. Then I heard he was holding a week-end meeting of the Liberal Shadow Cabinet down on his farm. I suggested to Hodgson, then writing our leaders, that he ought to get an invitation, so we should know what was afoot. He tried, but was fobbed off. 'I find it quite impossible,' his memorandum to me read, 'to obtain an invitation to Lloyd George's Churt conference, which is a meeting of the Liberal Shadow Cabinet to which no one at all will be admitted but members—Samuel, Simon, etc. The proposal under discussion is that Lloyd George should at once approach Baldwin with an offer to support him and keep him in power for two years or eighteen months, on these conditions: (1) Electoral Reform;

(2) Immediate action on the lines of the Liberal unemployment policy; (3) Reconstruction of the Ministry with Austen excluded, Bob Cecil probably at the Foreign Office, and Churchill to lead in the Commons.' The memorandum went on to say that should these terms be refused by Baldwin (and, of course, one wondered how he could possibly think of acceptance), news of the refusal might be published to show that the Tories had put the Socialists in power.

CHAPTER V

A Rest from Politics—Lord Beaverbook and Me—The 'Crusader' Tempts—Tim Healy at Chevkley—The 'Wicked Uncles'—Another Shaw Interlude.

THE story of political Liberalism as seen from the newspaper bridge after that unhappy election is one of increasing tension and backbiting among the various sections. 'We told you so,' was the attitude of those who had argued that Lloyd George was incapable of uniting the party or leading it to victory. The dog-fight broke out all over again.

It was a relief to find other things claiming my attention. For example, readers were beginning to notice the various changes in the appearance of our paper as the result of the drive to bring it abreast of modern practice and technique. Some of them were getting those 'shocks' which Henry Cadbury and I had lightly mentioned in Melbourne. One Manchester reader objected to our booming 'of Charlie Chaplin' and demanded to know 'what the Cadbury ladies thought of their new editor who had besmirched and trampled on their good name'. Another saw red because of some typographical change and wrote asking who was the 'damn' lunatic' who had been turned loose on the paper. One gentleman wrote regularly from a West End address labelling me and almost every member of my staff as 'traitors', and suggesting all manner of devilish tortures as punishment—for what he omitted to say. Despite ebb and flow our sales were on a rising tide and I was fortified by the loyal backing of the other directors, executives, and staffs. Sometimes, from quite unexpected quarters associated with the fortunes of our paper I would receive rare and refreshing encouragement, as for instance:

> 'I am all out for action, snappy news, and bright, attractive articles. I cannot believe that the average public want to have thrust down their throats too much about the League of Nations, or dull Parliamentary news. If they want to read about that, they will find it wherever

it is in the paper. I am afraid I distrust the vast majority of people who say they abhor sensationalism, etc., for I am pretty certain that if you put most of them in a room with the Liberal Yellow Book and the *News of the World*, and they knew they would not be disturbed, I know which they would pick up and read. After all, there are two ways of running a newspaper, one as a means of propaganda, in which case it must be subsidized, and the other as a business concern where you want to sell something to the public. If you want the public to buy a product, they must have what they want and not what the proprietors want them to have.'

Freedom from political preoccupation was, however, not to be my lot. Not only because of the irruptions of the disunited Liberals. There was Lord Beaverbrook on the horizon. As if a harassed Liberal editor had not enough on hand in politics with the dissensions of his own party, Beaverbrook began towards the end of 1929 to take the liveliest interest in me, my health, my doings and especially my reactions to his own political activities. I had met him on several occasions and liked him. He was a man without any affectations or reservations, to whom you could always talk naturally. He did not pose, and hated others to do so. My meetings with him were a never-failing tonic to me; and I flatter myself, that, coming from the rival camp, I was also a tonic to him in comparison with the platoons of genuflecting admirers men of his position must needs suffer. I do not even now know him well enough to be quite sure about the fundamentals in him. After arguments up and down his garden path at lovely Cherkley, he would sometimes say, 'Well, Tom, you belong to one school of thought and I to another and no amount of argument will alter us . . . so let's go and see what the others are doing.' Yet, I wonder if fundamentally the gulf between us was as wide as that statement implied, so often did he seem to me to outdo the Radicals in his Radical views—almost the views of a peasant on some of the burning social questions of the day as they affected the bottom dog. He was as conscious of inequalities and as sympathetic to the working man as any

social reformer I ever met. In regard to the Empire, I felt that his aims were almost identical with mine, though our methods of implementing those aims diverged. Our major difference concerned international affairs. He would have no truck with foreigners, but he never gave me what I considered a logical reason why. He would scoff good-naturedly at my defence of international co-operation. My arguments in favour of the League of Nations (or something even better, for I never disguised my disappointment at its failures) made his mouth stretch from ear to ear in the best backwoods smile. Apart from these philosophic differences I felt I had much in common with him. Except for that kink about the foreigner he was equipped with great breadth of mind and vision. A man of the world, he had not lost his simple tastes. He was a charming host, the gift of his company being a relief from the depressing atmosphere of dissension in my own political camp.

Most of Beaverbrook's success as a newspaper personality, I feel, now that I look at him in perspective, has been due to his simple, direct, uncompromising policies—policies his readers could understand. They have been put over fearlessly and consistently, while rivals have wobbled all round the show. Among the many invertebrates of Fleet Street he has had backbone and stuck firmly to his policies all the time I have known him, whatever others may have tried to persuade him to do. That quality of fervour endowed him with the crusader's halo. It was a great advantage to be taken by Beaverbrook behind the scenes of other political activities than our own, and to have this helpful background in focusing the movements of our time. I often think that my Bouverie Street associates failed to see it that way. I do not delude myself now that my friendly meetings with Beaverbrook, which I never hid from them, could have done me any good in their eyes. They may have feared that my spoon was not long enough for supping with the Devil. One remark made some years later when I left the *News Chronicle*—'You will always be able to get a job with Beaverbrook'—illumined the secret corners of some minds. Those who said that had not understood that there was nothing of cupboard love in my friendship with Beaverbrook; and that

the least likely thing ever to happen to me was to be found in his employ. I liked him too well as a friend. On that point let me go to my diary:

> *Sunday, July 28th 1929.* Beaverbrook asked me to lunch at Cherkley Court, his place near Leatherhead. After eating—and how frugally he himself eats—we sat and talked in a room with a view of the Downs towards Box Hill. He told me about his Empire Crusade scheme. Then he told me that William Harrison, chief proprietor of the *Daily Chronicle*, had offered Beverley Baxter £10,000 a year to leave the editorship of the *Daily Express* and go to him.
>
> 'Is he going?' I asked Beaverbrook.
>
> He nodded. He then intimated to me that the coming vacancy was mine. He mentioned a salary of £6,000 a year. When I hesitated, he said it could be more. I said I could not consider the matter then as I was not free. He said, 'Why do people like you sign contracts?' I thanked him and said I could not discuss the matter for another two years.

Maybe I was the fool he said I was to turn that flattering and tempting offer down. The salary he mentioned was more than double that I was then getting. I could doubtless have arranged to terminate my agreement, for nothing is so full of loopholes as a journalist's contract, but it never occurred to me to suggest that. I had signed up with the *Daily News*, and what I had signed I intended to stand by to the letter for the period named. I did not tell them about this—not until years later when I said farewell. I had felt they would be entitled to regard it as an attempt to get more money out of them. When eventually I came to the parting of the ways that reference to the possibility of my getting a job with Beaverbrook made me smart. I told them of the offer of four years ago and added, 'You see—I could never work for Beaverbrook now. To suggest that would insult him and stultify me.'

One was always sure of meeting interesting people at

Beaverbrook's. There was Tim Healy one Sunday at Cherkley in January 1930—a frowsy, slooping old figure, with bright brown Irish eyes and a sharp tongue. He and Beaverbrook started a long argument about the meaning of God and Heaven, with Lord Castlerosse, in loud check plus fours, butting in as a sort of referee. It was good to listen to Healy's sparkling talk. A year or more later when I was in Dublin watching the Irish sweepstake draw, I went with R. D. Blumenfeld to Chapelizod, where 'Tim' lay ill. We could not see him. He was dying. Blumenfeld told me that it was due to Beaverbrook that 'Tim' became first Governor-General of the Irish Free State. He said, 'Beaverbrook rang me up and asked me who ought to be first Governor-General. I replied, "Tim Healy". "Excellent," said Beaverbrook, and rang up Bonar Law, and Healy got the job. In those days Max (Beaverbrook) could do things like that. One thing he probably feels now is that he has not that power any longer.'

In February 1930 Lord Beaverbrook formed his United Empire Party and Lord Rothermere, much to the amused astonishment of Fleet Street, formed a *Daily Mail* branch. As everybody knew, these two 'wicked uncles' were destined from the start to be uncomfortable bedfellows. Rothermere soon wanted to tack on to Beaverbrook's banner his 'break with Moscow' and 'No surrender in India' stunts; and very soon Beaverbrook, who was aiming at one simple economic thing (Empire Free Trade), split with Rothermere. I have heard Beaverbrook express his own wonderment at ever having 'let Rothermere into the same bed', and it convulsed us to hear how Rothermere 'came in trampling like a bloody elephant, messing up my campaign by running in the other direction'.

I have a note of lunching with Lord Cowdray at the Bath Club about this time. He discussed Rothermere and Beaverbrook and said he thought that when Rothermere went, Beaverbrook might pop in and buy the *Daily Mail*.

While these 'wicked uncles' were still bedfellows I called Lloyd George's attention to the unholy association and suggested that he should come out at once with a resounding Free Trade lead against the food taxers. He did not respond.

He seldom crossed swords publicly with Beaverbrook. In private they were good friends.

Tuesday, March 4th 1930. Lunched with Lloyd George and others in Room E at the House of Commons. Mr. S. M. Bruce, whom I had known well in Australia when he was Prime Minister there, was the chief guest. I sat next to Lloyd George's vivacious daughter Megan. There was a lot of talk about Beaverbrook and his Empire Free Trade crusade. Bruce agreed that if a 'deal' could be done on some specific things there would be a chance of forwarding Empire economic unity, but Empire Free Trade he considered a clever slogan which did not mean what it said. I gathered he thought tariffs had got too high in Australia. Lloyd George agreed with me that Tariffs *v.* Free Trade was not the *moral* question so many people tried to make it. Megan sat and listened most of the time. She said she was used to it and had spent her life listening to her father and his guests on occasions like this and rather liked it. She also said that life in the south country had not deadened her affection for the Wales of her childhood; that was something in the blood. We talked also of the Food Taxes and some one mentioned how near we came to starvation in the War. I think it was Layton who said 'If our Wheat policy had been as vigorous as our Shell policy we should have been better off'. Megan slyly commented, 'That shows how badly balanced our War policy was.' Her father looked at her out of the corner of his eye but let it pass.

Lloyd George was inquisitive about Beaverbrook's United Empire Party. He said he thought it was going well in the country. Of the two 'wicked uncles' he said Rothermere was considered to have more resource than Beaverbrook. 'Resources?' I queried. 'Resource, I said,' said Lloyd George. 'Well,' I laughed, 'I beg to differ. I think Beaverbrook has more resource.'

I got back to the office to find a message awaiting me from Lord Beaverbrook. I went to Stornoway House to take tea with him. He was in formal morning dress with silk hat near by. I gathered he had been seeing Baldwin

and other people about the Food Taxes question and there was talk of a possible referendum. He spoke of Baldwin as being chivvied all over the place. 'What does Lloyd George think of him?' said Beaverbrook; and then: 'Why don't you have an article on "The Decay of Leadership". They are all going. Lloyd George too. They say he's finished? Is he? And Baldwin?'

In the search for 'surprise' in editorial content for our ascending paper I had the idea of asking famous men what had been the turning point in their career, and among those whose reflections I sought was G. Bernard Shaw. The sequel—and my first meeting with him—are described in a diary entry:

Thursday, March 6th 1930. Had a breezy half-hour with G. Bernard Shaw this morning at his flat, 4, Whitehall Court. Yesterday I sent J. L. Hodson to see him at Ayot St. Lawrence—the only way to catch these big men is to send right out to them wherever they are—not to 'phone first. The 'phone has sterilized many a good story. Hodson went to see if Shaw would give him an interview in reply to the question 'What was the turning point in your career?' Shaw received him graciously, and incidentally told Hodson that this year he was publishing a novel he wrote when 24—fifty years ago. *Immaturity* it is called. He hawked it fifty years ago round the publishers and one and all rejected it—including George Meredith, who was reader at the time for Chapman and Hall. When Hodson returned I said: 'We must go and see Shaw and ask him to let the *Daily News* publish it as a serial. It will be a real literary event. Already he has refused our offer to serialize his play *The Apple Cart.* Let's have another shot with this novel.' To my surprise Shaw, who came to London this morning, agreed to see us. When we entered his businesslike office at Whitehall Court—Miss Patch, his secretary, showed us in—I could not suppress a feeling of excitement. Here, after all, was the monarch of literature in his den. His surroundings were of great simplicity but disappointingly conventional for

so unconventional a man. I was struck right away by this, but more, perhaps, by the clean healthiness and virility of the man. He wore a brown tweed suit and brown shoes—good stuff and so nicely polished. His face, one long, kind smile, with the tight, unflabby skin of the out-of-doors good liver. Eyes all a sparkle; kindly mouth with teeth asserting their whiteness. His beard was less shaggy than I had expected. Tall, alert, lithe, he strode across the room and placed chairs for us. There was something very loose-limbed about him. Indeed, except that he was better groomed, and his beard well trimmed, he might have passed for an Australian 'dad'—the typical bush farmer whose caricatures so often illuminate the Australian papers. His voice was magic—soft, clear, confident. But he made no bookish epigrams. He was a very ordinary human being in all he did and said. I opened the conversation by repeating what Hodson had told me about his fifty years' old novel.

Shaw: And I suppose you want it for the *Daily News*?

Me. That's just it—as a serial.

Shaw. Well, you can't have it.

Me. That's straight. You remember our correspondence about the *Apple Cart*?

Shaw. Yes.

Me. I thought, maybe, as you had turned me down then there might be a chance with this novel.

Shaw. I can't. I am not allowed under my contract to serialize anything. Besides what the *Daily News* wants is news. There's no news in this novel. It's stale news.

Me. It would be a great literary event. Anything you do is news. You know—you are one of the most talked of men in the world.

Shaw. I know that (without a smile). But what do you think I should want you to pay?

Me. What *would* you want?

Shaw. Have you brought £50,000 with you?

Me. That's ridiculous.

Shaw. Well, what am I worth—£5?

Me. That's equally ridiculous. Supposing we started talking business at £1,000.

My mind went back for a moment to an offer I had recently made to him to go to the League of Nations Assembly at Geneva for our paper and let us have an article giving his reactions to the debates. He had telegraphed me, 'What offers? Am already offered £2,500.' I had not replied: and a day or two later Reuter syndicated him at £5 per newspaper.

Shaw. I am very glad to have this talk and to hear that the *Daily News* knows it has to pay me well.

Me. But don't imagine we are rolling in money.

Shaw. I can't make out why you want to publish as a serial anything I write. Why, if you did that with this novel you would go bankrupt.

Me. We should do nothing of the kind, Mr. Shaw. It would do us a lot of good. Here you see two typical new young men of the *Daily News*. The newspaper game is not what it was and we've got to fight harder for success.

Shaw. That's true—that's true. It's a much better paper and has shown a lot of enterprise and activity lately. So you are the man who has been gingering it up and giving it new life. . . .

Me. It's been collar work. The political handicap——the Nonconformist handicap. . . .

Shaw. I agree.

Me. I think you will agree that as a popular newspaper we are the equal of any rival; but we are something more—and this is where you come in, and where our presence here is explained, or excused. We have occupied and still occupy a special position in relation to literature—books—and authors. We have made the most of our news and our features. We want now to make the most of our other asset. A Bernard Shaw serial would be the making of us. This is a critical year for the paper—and for the new young men whose careers are bound up with it.

Shaw. Why critical this year?

Me. Well, we have the *Daily Herald* coming out in its new form. That is a serious challenge to us.

Shaw. Well, I should feel I ought to help the *Herald.* I am a Socialist.

Me. But they have not asked you to help. Then there is the *Daily Chronicle.*

Shaw. What! Is that paper still alive? Well, I still think that it would be no help to you to publish my novel or play. You would lose a lot of your readers. What you want is news—and, in my case, my contract with the publishers prevents me.

Hodson then suggested that some of the earlier novels 'which nobody has read' might be serialized: but Shaw would not budge. Then Hodson suggested he should write us a few articles on the future of the films. No success. 'One trouble is,' said Shaw, 'that if I wrote anything like that I should have all the other papers ringing up me asking if they could repeat it. If I say a thing to one paper, another always wants to repeat it. . . . Why do they all want to do that?' He went on to recall the days when papers would not mention his name. I said I knew that was so when I was on the *Daily Mail.* 'Yes,' said Shaw. 'The then literary editor of the paper would take nothing of mine because Northcliffe ordered him not to have his papers used to advertise "the damned Socialist".' As we came away Shaw said: 'It has been very nice to meet you and talk to you and I thank you very much for your offer and I hope you don't think I don't appreciate it.'

'Well, come on, Hodson,' I said. 'We've lost.'

Shaw's eyes twinkled.

'But,' I said to him over my shoulder, 'if anything of what has been said lingers in your mind—you know where to find us.'

But he left us severely alone.

CHAPTER VI

I meet Lady Oxford—Tête-à-tête at Bedford Square—Her Balfour Article—Mrs. Snowden's Lloyd George Luncheon —Walter Layton comes to town—Official Secrets Act— I Apologize to Amy Johnson.

TUESDAY, March 18th 1930. Lloyd George has exclusive articles in *Daily Express* on Parliament—'the growing conviction that there is something wrong'—there should be more small committees to examine Bills, leaving the House free for vital matters of principle—'business men appalled at the leisurely waste of national time' and so on. Ellen Wilkinson wrote something of the same sort in the *Star* the other day. Last year when we asked Lloyd George to write about this, he hedged. We are always being slapped by Liberals for not being more helpful to the party. But what can we do when Lloyd George writes chiefly for the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, and Grey and Samuel for *The Times* or *Observer*?

Smarting under this seeming liking of Lloyd George for a platform in the Tory Press sent me after Lady Oxford again. I felt it might stir him to write for us if she came into our picture.

Friday, March 21st 1930. In the morning rang up Lady Oxford and asked her to write Lord Balfour's memorial service at the Abbey to-morrow for the *Daily News*. Her secretary said she would 'think it over'. Later she rang up and said that Lady Oxford would do 1,000 words for £50, though her usual price was £100.

At 6.30 went to 44, Bedford Square to see Lady Oxford. I was shown into a room overlooking the square, dark and with blinds drawn. The butler switched on a dim light over an oil painting of old warships. A ghostly room, I thought. In the darkness I could make little of it except a polished floor, a few rugs, a desk and a table or two with knicknacks. I flopped into the first chair I could see and leaned back wondering what Lady Oxford

was going to be like. I heard a clear, steady voice in the hall, and then, 'Mr. Clarke, Mr. Clarke. You are in the dark.' I rose and walked towards the door and she led me to a bright room. I saw a woman of slim figure in a black gown. Vigorous face, thin lips, broad nose. Younger looking than I had expected.

Me. I have waited long for this honour of meeting you.

Lady Oxford (passing the cigarettes and lighting her own). You could always have seen me.

Me. I never met your husband either.

Lady Oxford. What a pity.

Me. But I heard him speak.

Lady Oxford. Ah, that was something. Look at him here (picking up a portrait from the table at her side). He was so kind. . . . And this is one in 1884 (handing me another showing only the back of a head). When one got tired of seeing one's face always photographed we did things like this—just a fresh photo.

Me. How novel—and as long ago as the year I was born.

When we came to discuss the proposed Balfour article Lady Oxford told me she did not like writing scraps for newspapers. 'Newspaper writing does us no good—too hasty. It has spoiled Lord Birkenhead's style—writing to order and so on. The same is true of Dean Inge. I don't intend to do it.' She talked of her £10,000 for this book and £7,000 for that. 'I made a mistake trying to write a novel,' she said, 'that's not in my line.'

My heart went to my boots. She was going to turn me down again.

Me. But this is a special occasion.

Lady Oxford. Oh, please don't fear. I am going to keep my promise to write for you the Balfour memorial service.

A pause.

Lady Oxford. But I want £75, not £50.

Another pause.

Me. That's all right. Make it £75.

Lady Oxford. Have you power to do that?

Me. I have.

Lady Oxford. Because it is wasting time to discuss these things with people who have not the power to see them carried out. I had lunch with Mr. —— of the ——, and wrote a memoir of A. J. B. for which he said I was to be paid £150. Then a Mr. —— wrote me to say there had been a misunderstanding. What misunderstanding? So I sent the article elsewhere.

Me. There will be no misunderstanding to-day.

Lady Oxford. Do you care to tell me how much you get from the Cadburys?

I told her.

Lady Oxford. Well, that's not so bad (as if accepting the figure as evidence of my 'power' to raise the price for her article). Now I wonder if I can do what you want me to.

Me. Surely you write easily? Do you write quickly?

Lady Oxford (sweeping a hand across her face). Like that. Zipp! Like lightning! I'm off immediately I get up in the morning. But I won't know what to write about this memorial service. The Abbey is so dark you cannot see any one.

Me. Write as if you were writing a letter about it to a friend.

Lady Oxford. What would *you* write? When you get home to-night sit down and write what you would write and let me know. Say what you like.

We talked of Lloyd George. I said I liked him. He was a live personality.

Lady Oxford. He is charming and refreshing and so delightful to talk to and all that; but *what* he has done to our party. Then *your* paper! How brutally it behaved to my husband even when he was on a sick bed. Still, *you* were not in that. I know you were far away. I have not read your paper for a year, but I bought a copy this morning.

Me. I'm glad I've been the means of bringing us in touch again.

There was a reference to Northcliffe. She spoke more kindly of him than one might have expected. 'He knew his job,' she said.

She told me, in racy, sparkling phrase, the story of the

'souls', of which Balfour years ago was the leading spirit. It was difficult to keep up with her. She talked of the days when only seventeen she came to London. She showed me photos and said she had a diary full of things about A. J. B., 'but, of course, I can't go into them.' Names like Tennant, Lyttelton, Cust, Wyndham ran about her breathless conversation. I can't remember it all—just a confused recollection of names in the social and political story of a former generation. As I rose to go she said she was sorry we had to cut short so interesting a chat, 'but I must rush off to dress for dinner. Are *you* dining out? No? Then when you get home write what you would write if you were me to-morrow.'

I picked up a hat.

'Oh! That is my son's disreputable headgear,' said Lady Oxford.

'Yes, I recognized it,' I said, retrieving my own.

I did as she suggested. I forget what my message to her was, but this was her letter in reply:

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1,
March 23rd 1930

Dear Mr. Clarke,

It was very nice of you to try to help me by your suggestions and I thank you, but I alas! am a writer that no one can help. There is a Scotch saying that you must ride the ford as you find it, and the ford is in this case—myself. I cannot add another word to this article over which I have given a lot of thought, and which I hope is not too serious nor too long.

Yours in sincerity,
Margot Oxford

Her article (appeared March 24th 1930) had not much news of the Abbey ceremony in it, but was more of a tribute to 'a man I have known and cared for since the year 1881'. It was not the usual laudatory affair, for, as she so truly wrote 'nothing in my experience removes you so far from your dead as what is said and written about them when they

die'. She was a stickler for having her article printed as written. Even her split infinitives had to be protected from those purists in the readers' box—those worthy 'correctors of the Press' who save the skins of many a writer.

Another woman of power behind the scenes in those days comes to memory—Mrs. Philip (now Viscountess) Snowden, whom I met at lunch the day I first met Lady Oxford. As wife of the Chancellor Mrs. Snowden was enjoying every minute of the whirl of life at 11, Downing Street. A tall, good-looking regal woman with a sympathetic smile, this former golden-haired teacher from Yorkshire mentioned a lunch she had given to Lloyd George and other Free Traders a day or two before.

After the lunch Lloyd George's party in the House abstained from voting against Labour's Coal Bill—thus saving the Government.

'What was the bargain between you and Lloyd George?' I asked, 'electoral reform of Lloyd George's variety?'

She repudiated my wicked thought; there was *no* bargain.

'Then why did you give Lloyd George a party—among some of his bitterest opponents?'

'Because,' she said, 'I just love having my little tricks and doing daring things. It's such good fun.'

Mr. Stanley Bruce, ex-Prime Minister of Australia, who was also at our lunch, looked at her down his nose as if to say, 'Women in politics behind the scenes—not for me.' Later Mrs. Snowden wrote me she would have talked more freely had Bruce not been present and she disliked airing views which might have been repugnant to a fellow guest.

Another figure came on to the Bouverie Street stage—Walter Layton, editor of the *Economist* and fresh back from India, where he had been acting as financial assessor to the Simon Commission. He had been 'in the wings' at our newspaper office for some time. He had been at Cambridge with some of the Cadbury young men and his advice was sought on various matters of finance and administration. He gave a luncheon at Anderton's in Fleet Street to which I was asked. I wondered why when I saw the others, and then concluded it was probably a friendly attempt to extend my political and economic education. Among them were

Dwight Morrow (United States Ambassador to Mexico and father-in-law of Lindbergh and one of the United States delegates to the Naval Conference), Sir Otto Niemeyer (Bank of England), Hon. R. H. Brand (Lazards), H. D. Henderson (of the Economic Advisory Committee), and Arthur Pugh (General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Federation). I have a diary note of the occasion:

March 25th 1930. Quite a human collection for economists and financiers. Morrow—what delicate hands, like a woman's, and keen face—talked of the Naval Conference and how something must be saved from it all. Brand talked of the decay of German commercial morality. Pugh of France as the spoilt child of the world. Niemeyer, mostly a listener, looked very well fed and sporty. Talk floated around me of rationalization, commodity prices, bills, parities, and so on until I got a headache.

Thursday, April 24th 1930. Went to Australia House to Sir Granville's Ryrie's reception of the Australian Test Team cricketers. A very young lot, and very shy. Went on with them to the Savoy to the British Sportsmen's Club lunch; but the sportsmen haven't asked Jack Hobbs or any other professionals. Speeches terrible—that is of the English hosts. Old chaps like Lord Plumer and Lord Harris wallowing in early Victorianism. Bill Woodful, the Australian captain, the only good speaker—in length, quality, and style. Our cricket will have to be better than our oratory if we are to win the Tests. When I spoke to Ponsford about our disregard of folk like Jack Hobbs he said: 'Well, it's a thing we simply can't understand. It's something quite foreign to us Australians—so we never say anything about it.'

Tuesday, April 29th 1930. Had a brief talk with H. G. Wells to-night at the Book Society dinner at Park Lane Hotel. I thought these folk would be more precious and long-haired than they were: but the only really literary-looking blokes were Robert Lynd and E. Marjoribanks, though Lynd was the more distinguished in his untidiness than the other. Wells looks like a prosperous farmer and talks rather commonplace; but does not give you the idea

that he *knows* he's clever or *tries* to be. He enjoys the good things of life, the food, the wine, and the smokes. So human! Gave most of his conversation to good-looking and vivacious Lady Dorothy Brooke. He sure has the eye for a pretty woman. During A. P. Herbert's speech Wells blew his nose a lot and chipped in now and then with jests such as 'Eat more books'. He neither looks, nor acts, nor talks, profound. I reminded him of one or two talks we had had over the 'phone in the Northcliffe days, and called to his mind his American articles after the War which were stopped by *Daily Mail* editor, Tom Marlowe, because of their attacks on France.

'Yes, I remember that,' said Wells, 'but they (the articles) were justified. Everybody sees that now.'

Lord d'Abernon was there—very stolid looking, like one of those Crystal Palace busts; J. B. Priestley swinging about like a Rugger three-quarter; Hugh Walpole might have been an 'honorary' at a hospital; Blumenfeld buzzed about calling everybody by their Christian names and I talked with General 'Jack' Seeley. He remembered the occasion when we came back from New York together in the *Berengaria* in 1920 and I lent him my silk hat (which I had never used in U.S.A.) and my dressing-gown, for the fancy dress ball. I chaffed him, as a Liberal, for writing his war reminiscences for the Tory Press.

Wednesday, April 30th 1930. Feel I made a bit of history to-day. Wireless 'phone service to Australia was opened and I had first public call-up from George Taylor of *Melbourne Herald.* To hear his 'Hallo, Tom,' from 12,000 miles away was one of the thrilling moments of my life. It was breakfast talking to tea; spring talking to autumn; I was talking to a man eight hours in the future—for the day's events, such as tea, he mentioned to me, were past for him and future for me. I said to Robert Lynd, who dropped in to see me: 'I have just talked to a man, and if I wanted to shake hands with him it would take me thirty days. What do you make of that for magic?'

'In a few years,' said Robert, 'you will not only talk to him—you will *see* him.'

Thursday, May 1st 1930. To-day we said farewells to

Edward Cadbury (Chairman) and Henry Cadbury (Managing Director)—though they are remaining on as directors and have made it plain the Cadbury family does not mean to give up the *Daily News*—a liaison which is comforting to us and which, as Edward said, has cost them a lot of cash. Their father sunk hundreds of thousands in the paper and they mean to stick to it. Laurence Cadbury, a breezy young chap, is coming in as Chairman. I presided at a farewell staff luncheon at the Hotel Russell. I spoke of the integrity and simplicity of the Cadburys and the good uses to which they had put their wealth. Edward talked of his twenty-three years and hoped the *Daily News* would continue to stand for freedom, and war on oppression of all sort. Henry was much affected. He is going farming—back to his old love after nearly a quarter of a century in Fleet Street. His eyes are very bad and he can hardly read.

May 2nd 1930. The news that all the 'precious' fashionable people are talking about to-day is the sudden death of Luigi, the boss of the famous Embassy Club in Old Bond Street—where princes, millionaires, social butterflies, actresses, and newspaper gossip-writers lunch, or dine, or sup. I lunched there on Tuesday—Harold Pemberton with me. I spoke a moment or two to Luigi—silver-haired, dapper, diplomatic. I don't suppose he really knew who I was but he pretended to know me quite well. That's one of the secrets of his success as the king of private clubland. He made everybody feel important. That was his business. And now, less than three days later, he is suddenly dead—this courteous little Italian who was once a 6*s.*-a-week waiter, and who is said to have made as much as £125,000 by studying how to flatter the English smart set. Last year I saw him on a swagger golf course—plus fours and all that, and a Rolls-Royce and a pretty daughter—mixing with the social bugs to whom, later in the evening, he would bow deferentially as they entered his exclusive club. We are a wonderful country. I wonder if any Englishman would do so well in Italy as this little Italian has done in England by capitalizing our passion for snobbery.

Tuesday, May 6th 1930. R. J. Cruikshank, our New York correspondent, came to dine at Dulwich to-night —also H. V. Morton and wife and Gui St. Bernard, our Art Critic, and Iris Downing, editress of our Woman's Page. Morton told us the story of his first interview with George Bernard Shaw, when he (Morton) was a reporter in Birmingham. Shaw saw it in proof, put his pencil through it as 'rubbish' and then wrote out his own interview on the proof. Morton kept the proof as a souvenir, but later it passed out of his hands and he had to buy it back recently at a sale of Shaw manuscripts. I asked Morton why he didn't give up daily journalism—he's on the *Express*—and write books. He said he often felt like doing that, but he really loved the daily round of journalism and would feel out of touch with life if he gave it up.

Tuesday, May 13th 1930. Attended emergency meeting of Newspaper Proprietors' Association called to consider what to do regarding the five-hours police interrogation of *Daily Chronicle* political correspondent for publishing news that Gandhi was to be arrested. News of this Cabinet decision appeared in *Telegraph*, *Sketch*, and *Chronicle*. I hear the King read of it in the papers before he had had the news in his Cabinet papers, and he 'phoned Ramsay MacDonald and showed some anger, and insisted on the matter being probed to the bottom. Ramsay got the Attorney-General (Jowitt), to act under Section VI of the Official Secrets Act and police officers visited the newspaper offices concerned. Assurances were given that the information had not been improperly obtained. In the case of the *Chronicle* it was obvious that the paragraph had been written by the Political Correspondent. Thereupon the police went to his house and after a lot of parleying got the information that the paragraph was written from inferences drawn from a remark dropped by a certain Cabinet Minister! This comic turn to the affair of course ended it. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association after a long pow-wow passed a resolution—mostly a pious gesture about liberty of the Press—but also suggesting amendment of sections of the Act so far as they relate to civil affairs. There seems no doubt that the

Act was not understood to apply to alleged Press offences, and the old struggle between politicians and the Press looks like being reopened. The intriguing thing is that the King is in the background in rather a temper, and no doubt his grievance at not being informed before the news leaked out is sound. I hear he had Ramsay MacDonald at Windsor last week-end and gave him a 'terrible time'. Ramsay's vanity is also no doubt responsible to some degree for the clumsy way in which the matter has been handled.

Saturday, May 24th 1930. I have written an article apologizing to Amy Johnson, the 26-years-old Hull girl who landed at Port Darwin to-day after a 20 days' flight to Australia alone, in a Gipsy Moth—apologizing for not believing she could do it. I could probably have bought her story in advance a week or two ago for £50, but I did not believe she could do the flight and I turned her down. When she came to see me she was asked why didn't she go to the *Daily Mail.* She said she had been turned down there too. Nobody believed in her and she started her flight with practically nobody's blessing. It wasn't until she reached India that the papers began to sit up and take notice. In the past day or two the interest in her has been terrific and I can't help regretting having missed the story. Of course I could have made her no offer that would have held her—as the *Mail* have done since she came right in the limelight as a first-class figure of romantic achievement. That's the handicap of our show! We don't throw the big money about. I have been hearing of the discouragements she had to overcome. Lord Wakefield was approached early in January. He felt her proposed flight was a hopeless job for the girl to tackle. Miss Johnson next saw Mr. Fenton, the Australian Minister for Trade and Customs, who was visiting London. He patted her on the back as a kindly uncle would, and said: 'Go to Australia by steamer, my girl. You would be foolish to try to fly there.' Her doggedness thrived on opposition, and she went next to the High Commissioner, bluff Sir Granville Ryrie, and he met the occasion, as is his way, by telling her a story. He told her

about the Red Indian who tried to stop an express train on the prairie. 'Everybody admired his courage, but not his judgment,' he said. This sort of thing went on for some time, one disappointing interview after another, until Miss Johnson was introduced to Sir Sefton Brancker. He in his turn put in a further word with Lord Wakefield, who melted before the renewed evidence of the girl's doggedness, and promised to guarantee at least her petrol supplies. This would represent perhaps some £300. It was a start. Amy Johnson's father had already told her that, failing all else, and in view of her determination, he would back her. She then arranged to buy the aeroplane. It cost her some hundreds of pounds—with alterations, I understand, some £600 in all. Then she got in touch through an Australian journalist friend of mine with Fleet Street. He rang me up one day in March and asked if we were sufficiently interested to assist with the financing of a flight to Australia by a young woman. Fleet Street is the happy hunting-ground for all sorts of people with ideas of seeing the world at a newspaper's expense. Men and women who want to ride bicycles across the Alps, walk across Siberia, explore the African jungle, come to persuade us to open our safes and help them to realize their dreams, in return for which they offer to write the 'story'. So I said, 'Who is she? Anyhow, flying to Australia is not very original, and the last woman who went took months.'

'Her name is Johnson. She means to do it—and alone. She's her own mechanic. Will you see her?'

I said I would if she would write and tell me all about it. She did. She wrote on March 23rd from the London Aeroplane Club, Stag Lane Aerodrome, Edgware. She said among other things:

'My plans are still indefinite, the reason being that I am waiting for a new type of plane to be finished which if successful in its tests, I hope to fly to Australia sometime in May. The date of my departure is entirely dependent on the progress of the construction of the machine. The plane itself will create widespread interest in aeronautical

circles if successful, but for the moment no details are available.

'I shall fly solo, and have hopes of beating the existing record to Australia by taking a short route through Europe. The rest of my journey will be by the orthodox route. If everything goes well, I shall fly back, either at once if I can manage it, before the monsoons break in India, or after touring Australia.'

She added that it was essential she made the flight 'pay for itself'.

I was not impressed, but I wrote asking her to come to see me at any time to discuss the matter. I wanted to dissuade her. To have any responsibility for a young girl's going along on such an audacious journey was not to my liking. The most noticeable thing about Amy Johnson was her complete independence. She said she did not want any newspaper publicity—she was making the trip for her own amusement, and if any one cared to write about her in the papers—well that was their affair. She had been told her venture was worth a lot of money to any paper who would pay it, but was not particularly interested; and she tossed her head with its long, swinging ear-rings. She is small and slight, blue-eyed, fair-haired but with an air of strength and will-power—something almost masculine, given the lie by the ear-rings which continually thrust themselves on one's notice. They seemed to be there for the purpose of accentuating each toss of the small, haughty head, and showing the determination of their owner. They said, in their nodding way, what Miss Johnson did not put in words: 'You may not think much of me, but I'll show you I can do it.'

Anyway I turned her down and I had one more letter from her, a rather delightfully petulant protest against our announcement of her project, in which she said:

'I am not 23, and my age is of no importance. The longest flight I have done is not 200 miles; anyhow London to Hull is only 147 miles by air. I am not making a high-speed flight, and, although I have a large fuel

capacity, I do not intend making 1,000 miles non-stop hops. My ambition is not to surpass the record time set up by Mr. Hinkler—in fact, I am positively certain that his time cannot be surpassed in a light aeroplane. My route is not across France and Italy and I do not touch Egypt.'

I heard no more from her. Disgusted with polite indifference and fatherly advice, this embodiment of that modern youth which we, her elders, have hardly yet come to understand, turned her back on the lot of us. The next we heard of her she was off. Even then neither Press nor public got excited. We probably felt she would do a nice flight or two and then come down with a spot of trouble at Vienna or somewhere like that, and hurry back home. With her arrival in India two days ahead of Hinkler's time, Amy Johnson's letters I have quoted help us now to know the girl we misunderstood—terse, businesslike, dogged. I'm afraid most of those who came in touch with her failed to visualize her as a girl out of the ordinary. That is her triumph, to have innocently hoodwinked us all by hiding under a cloak of ordinariness the genius that is in her. Lord Wakefield thought her quest was hopeless; now he thinks her achievement is 'better than Lindbergh'. Sir Granville Ryrie is thinking of another story to point a new and more appropriate moral. Even the one journalist who believed in her all along had to confess to me yesterday, 'Yes, until you know her she appears quite ordinary—nothing striking about her. There are dozens like her working in the City. . . . The only thing that really impressed me was her dashed doggedness.' Mr. Fenton, who most likely will meet her in his own country, to which he has gone by the steamer he advised for her, might very well pat her on the back again and say: 'Girlie, you've done enough. We all believe in you now. Get off to bed.' Somehow that would seem about the right ending to this epic of ordinary English girlhood.

CHAPTER VII

Tragedy of the 'Daily Chronicle'—Puzzled Prince—Lloyd George at the Derby—My Talks with Simon and Samuel—Beaverbrook's Party—H. G. Wells, Lloyd George, and Others—Liberalism in Sunset—The Premier and the Press—Lady Oxford writes on Lord Birkenhead.

SIR WALTER LAYTON had become Chairman and Managing Director of the *News and Westminster*. His appointment synchronized with the receipt of shoals of letters from readers asking for more adequate Parliamentary reports, especially of the speeches and doings of Liberals. I felt it was an organized demonstration. I had my suspicion that it was a sequel to a deputation of young Liberals that had been to see me, led by Aubrey Herbert, to represent that our paper was not adequately serving the Liberal Party. They were nice boys and put up a case good enough from party propaganda point of view, but with no appreciation of the practical facts of newspaper production and the need for commercial success. I told them we were full of all the goodwill in the world, but we had to make our paper pay. Overweighting it with dull propaganda would render the paper eventually valueless to the party. When they said I did not give enough publicity to the leaders they gave me a fine opening. Why, I asked, did those leaders write mostly for the Tory Press?

'Probably they pay more,' one of the young men said, and there was no reply to that.

So I went to Layton to talk this problem over, and he said, 'Yes, we have got a job before us. We have got to be less defeatist in our political attitude.'

Layton, who has now become a leading figure in Fleet Street, hailed even by a Beaverbrook organ as 'the spokesman of the Press' is a slightly built, unassuming man with the steel-blue misty eyes of genius. As Robert Lynd said, there was a sort of 'saintliness' about him. I wondered as we talked how this escapee from the calm of economic professorships and Radical academics, then well on the way to fifty, would fare on the comparatively vulgar battlefield of modern

popular journalism, where the gentlest and inexperienced go to the wall quicker than anywhere else. Was he going to be another critic of my objectivity? Was he going to be for or against Lloyd George? For or against the Asquithians?

He soon made it clear that he came to us with complete independence of any party wing. That gladdened my heart. I knew he had been a League of Nations official and before that had been associated with Lloyd George on the War Munitions Council, but that didn't mean much to me, for Lloyd George had often said how little he thought of the experts. We sat and smoked—me my faithful pipe, Layton a chain of cigarettes. He didn't drink, but he was no bigot teetotaller. His silky reasonableness and complete lack of excitability appealed to me one moment and the next I was wondering if such an archpriest of sweet compromise was the man for the exciting scramble of Fleet Street. I wondered if he would have the energy, the driving force. His brain, I thought, as I heard him speak quietly and logically and with knowledge most profound, must be one of the best packed and smoothest running in England. His erudition appalled me. I thought of him as Bishop Berkeley's man 'already debauched with learning'. Then he told me it had not cost his parents a penny, either at school or the university. He had worked his own way through the forests of books.

Although Layton's taking the chair coincided with a splash article by A. J. Cummings headed 'The Great Radical Revival', predicting an eventual Liberal–Labour fusion (a picture of Lloyd George was included), I gathered that Layton's mind, like my own when I first came to Bouverie Street, had been directed to the business rather than the political needs of the paper; the immediate problem in that respect being the *Daily Chronicle*, now reported to be ready to fall into our basket.

Within a month of Layton's taking the Chair in Bouverie Street the *Daily Chronicle* did fall into our basket.

That unforgettable tragedy of Fleet Street, kept secret to the very last moment, brings melancholy to me even now. When it was all over I vowed I would never again take part

in such a sad business. The fusion with the *Westminster Gazette* had been distressing enough in its necessary sackings.

The *Daily Chronicle* was worse. How we managed to put through the amalgamation with such secrecy is still a wonder to me. It had nearly happened three months earlier. One Friday night we had got everything ready to appear on the Monday as the *News Chronicle*, but there was a midnight hitch and negotiations dragged on for another three months. On this second occasion the agreement was signed on Friday night, May 30th 1930 at 9 p.m. It was only then that we took the leading executives into our confidence and planned the new paper which was to appear within thirty-six hours. Secrecy was still imperative, for had they known what was happening the other papers—*Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, and *Daily Herald*—could have put out battalions of canvassers over the week-end, and, telling our readers there would be no *Daily Chronicle* on Monday, could have persuaded them, or tried to persuade them, to become registered readers of these other papers. A diary extract:

> *Early Monday morning, June 2nd 1930.* I am writing this in bed at home long after midnight, a copy of the new *News Chronicle* at my side. What a week-end! Since Saturday Fleet Street has been agog with rumours. My house has been besieged with inquirers, but I have been 'away at a week-end cottage and not on the telephone'. My son has been busy fobbing them off. The *Express* mistook him for the butler! And yet during the week-end I have been mostly within 100 yards of my office in Bouverie Street—never farther away than Layton's room at the *Economist*. He and Laurence Cadbury and B. F. Crosfield, with Cowdray, put the thing through for us on Friday night as far as finance is concerned, in conference at Cowdray's place or in Room 106 at the Waldorf Hotel. When I go into the office later to-day I have to see dozens of people to tell them their fate. All the week-end I have been working on lists of men and women, those who stay and those who go. I suppose it is true that by joining forces we are saving a bigger tragedy. The Cadburys appear to be top dogs still, with a three to two majority

on the controlling trust. Met Perris (editor *Daily Chronicle*) on Saturday in Tudor Street. He congratulated me on my appointment as editor and offered any help I wanted, 'but if you want to see me don't let it be at the *Daily News* office, please.' Almost the first men on the list I'm asked to keep are the *Daily Chronicle* racing tipsters. They have been doing rather well lately and are quite a vogue among the racegoers. We can't afford to let any rival paper snap them up and defeat us in this race for the million-sale field.'

Tuesday, June 3rd 1930. After having been under the necessity of sacking about a dozen men to-day I had to get into glad rags to go to the Countess of Ellesmere's reception at Bridgwater House for the Imperial Press delegates. On the steps at Bouverie Street as I passed out sat a weeping man—one of the dismissed reporters. I tried to comfort him—standing there shamefacedly in squash hat and evening clothes. 'It's terrible,' he said, 'what am I to do?' I told him to come and see me if he got no other work. One must do something for these colleagues. 'There, but for the grace of God——'

When Major Astor, chief proprietor of *The Times*, presented me at the reception to the Prince of Wales (now the Duke of Windsor) he was obviously at a loss how to describe me—'Mr. Tom Clarke, of the *Daily News*, *Westminster Gazette* and (fumbling a moment) I suppose, *Daily Chronicle*.' That seemed to puzzle the Prince. He stuck a finger of his left hand in his collar, shook my hand with his right, and let his eye wander to the next comer. An Australian friend came up and said he would give his dress shirt for a handshake with the Prince. Could not help feeling I had no right there on this melancholy day when so many of my colleagues were at that moment at home telling wives and children that they had been sacked. It's all wrong. I went back to Bouverie Street. I hid my crush hat in my coat and drew up my collar. Layton had been made a knight in the King's Birthday Honours for his services on the Indian Commission. 'I did not want it,' he told me, adding slyly, 'Didn't George Cadbury once say that a man who took a title should

no longer remain on the paper. Looks as if I were inviting the sack.'

My little girl Pat said to me to-day when I was saying how terrible I felt telling men they had to go, 'That must be awful, daddy. I suppose you kept all the married ones and let the singles go.'

Cowdray has sent congratulations to me and all who helped to produce the first number of the combined papers. 'It is quite a triumph. It could not have been better if there had been a week to prepare instead of thirty-six hours—perhaps it might not have been so good.'

A diary note of Thursday, June 5th 1930 reveals my aim, now that I had got Lady Oxford in the bag, to stimulate Lloyd George also to bestow some of his literary effusions on to our newly fused paper.

I have already referred to Lloyd George's interests in the *Daily Chronicle*. Now that it had ceased to exist as a separate newspaper I felt we ought to transfer his active goodwill to the new paper. His own brand of Liberalism had been interpretated by the *Daily Chronicle* during his suzerainty there, under a Trust which I understood guaranteed the support of Liberalism (whatever that might have meant in those days) and specified support for the Coal and Power policy, the Land policy, and Free Trade. That presented no difficulty, but I was not particularly anxious at the moment to splash Lloyd George on politics. I did not desire to irritate our more Asquithian readers. Yet I did want him to write. So when I heard he had never been to the Derby, I asked him if he would care to go and describe it for the *News Chronicle*. I offered him £50 and said I badly wanted his help with this new paper. His reply was that he would let me have an interview free. In this he told of his impressions at Epsom and said that he found football much more thrilling than horse-racing as a spectacle. He said he had spotted the winner, Blenheim, but 'of course, I didn't have a bet'. From the point of view of getting Lloyd George to spread himself on this Derby story, I think now I had made a mistake in arranging for J. A. Spender also to write his first impressions of the Derby. Spender,

too, claimed to have spotted the winner, like Lloyd George, and not only spotted it, but backed it. Spender went more fully into his system than Lloyd George. He said:

(1) He never backs the favourite.
(2) Never backs the horse he most fancies.
(3) After eliminating these two, backs the jockey whose appearance and face denote confidence.

Friday, June 6th 1930. My birthday. I went to hear Lloyd George speak on Empire to the Imperial Press delegates this morning. He was an inspiration and a revelation to those visitors from overseas who had thought he and Liberalism were defunct. He said the War had been decided not by Britain alone, but by the Empire. R. D. Blumenfeld, editor-in-chief of the *Daily Express,* amused himself during the speech by sketching, or making jesting notes, which he passed on to me. One of them was about the fusion of the two Liberal papers, as follows:

'There once was a paper called News,
Whose rivals, they all got the blues,
And when they went bust, the News formed a Trust.
And so they had nothing to lose.'

The fact that we were now the only surviving Liberal daily newspaper in London brought us the attention of Liberals who had seemed to lose sight of us when there were other newspapers besides the *Daily News.* Sir John Simon, for instance.

Monday, June 16th 1930. Sir John Simon, Chairman of the Indian Statutory Commission rang me up this morning to ask if I could help him find a traveller for about a month to go round to booksellers pushing and organizing the sale of the Report on India. 'You know,' he said, 'it's a Blue Book that's by way of becoming a best-seller, but it could be a better seller, and I want it to go. You may have some one displaced by your fusion who could do the work for me.' He said he had seen the need for real publicity to get the people to understand

the problem of India. I was rather taken aback by this sudden conversion of the aloof Sir John to the merits of publicity, and I jokingly said that the India Report ought to be put in a coloured jacket, perhaps with a gay nautch girl to decorate it. I told him that would make it go like hot cakes and he would be sure to get an attractive bookstall display. Although he demurred about the nautch girl, the idea of a less depressing cover than that of the usual Blue Book, seemed to appeal to him. 'I may do it, I may do it,' he said.

Saturday, June 7th 1930. Lunched with 'Jack' Akerman. a *Daily Chronicle* pundit, at the Berkeley. The only change in this ever-young man, who knows how to seize every opportunity, since I knew him in the Northcliffe days at *The Times* is a new touch of what seems like cultivated authority in his voice. A nice fellow. He thinks he could have pulled the *Daily Chronicle* round the corner had it been left to him. He told me that Major Astor, who became owner of *The Times* when Northcliffe died, had thought he would lose money on it. Instead he is making a lot. Akerman drove off in a gorgeous limousine with chauffeur. I took a humble taxi.

June 15th 1930. Marconi's issued yesterday an announcement recalling that to-day is 'an historic date in the developing of broadcasting' as 'it was on this date ten years ago that Dame Nellie Melba broadcast her memorable concert from the Marconi Company's experimental station at Chelmsford'. They talk of it as 'The Birth of British Broadcasting'. What they forget to talk about is that Northcliffe and I, then on the *Daily Mail* conceived the idea, and that we of the *Daily Mail* carried it out; and that I was strongly opposed by officialdom at Marconi's (except Arthur Burrows) for 'stunting', which, it was argued, could do no good to the development of wireless!

Tuesday, June 17th 1930. Will Dyson, the artist, whose brilliant cartoons were a few years ago such a feature of British journalism has come back after six years in Australia. He lunched with me and Valentine Williams to-day. Says he can't understand why we don't develop cartoonists in England instead of importing strips from

America. I showed him the chair in my room which Charles Dickens used when he was editor more than eighty years ago.

'Good gracious,' said Dyson, 'you ought to have it railed off and a brass plate on it. Let me sit in it.' He did.

'Gee,' he said, 'if the Americans knew you had this in your room they would besiege you and you'd get a million dollars for it.' I mentioned the chair a year or so ago to Dickens's grandson (a naval officer). He said he had heard of it and had wondered where the chair was. He said he would tell his father (Sir H. F. Dickens) about it. I said I'd be glad to let him come and see it. Dyson told me of an American friend who visited Dorchester not long ago and went into a barber's for a haircut. He mentioned Thomas Hardy, and the barber said: 'Oh, yes, I know him. I have been cutting Mr. Hardy's hair for the last forty-two years.' Excitedly the American said: 'Say, what do you do with it?'

Monday, June 23rd 1930. Talked for a moment to Sir Herbert Samuel on the future of the Liberal Party at the Government Reception at Lancaster House to-night to the delegates to the Colonial Office Conference. I said the Liberal Party ought to go after the young men as Beaverbrook was doing, and he agreed we might take a cue in that respect from Beaverbrook. I said, 'Why don't you write for us?' He replied jestingly that it was perhaps best to get your message in the enemy camp and he laughingly hinted that the remuneration of Liberal papers did not equal that of some weekly periodicals; but he said he *would* write for us and would not expect the same high remuneration. I passed on to meet dashing little Ellen Wilkinson, the audacious Labour M.P. who was there with Horrabin, our artist M.P. She said she was not necessarily a Free Trader but Philip Snowden dominated things. 'MacDonald is scared stiff of him.' I said the first Protectionist Government would probably be Labour. She and Horrabin didn't deny that. Then I ran into Lady Oxford. What uncanny, piercing brown eyes she has. She asked me about our paper and said,

'Tell me—you *are* going to remain Free Trade, aren't you? It is the only thing. Beaverbrook's policy is mad.' She talked of her son Anthony's film work. 'I suppose you put him up to that,' I said. 'No,' she said, 'he could not help it—he is a born artist and producer.' She told me she was writing another book and would make £6,000 out of it. 'Tell me what it's about,' I said. 'No, you must wait and see' (as her famous husband once said). 'Is it about America?' I asked. 'Are you going there again?' 'No, I would rather die,' she said with a laugh, and puffed away at her cigarette. I introduced Horrabin and Ellen Wilkinson to Lord Stradbroke (former Governor of Victoria) and his daughter, Lady Charlotte Rous. 'Here are two of the extreme Labour folk,' I said, 'meeting with a real old Tory.' Ellen looked at Stradbroke's medals and stroked them and said: 'Well, I do feel as if I had met one of the real Empire builders.'

Behind a screen in a remote room I found a little bar where one could get other than soft drinks. I was told it had been hidden there because Lord Passfield (Sydney Webb—then in the Government) was a teetotaller and did not approve of hard drinks at such functions. Those who did not discover this hidden treasure enjoyed nothing stronger than claret cup.

Wednesday, June 25th 1930. Met Lloyd George for a few minutes to-night at Beaverbrook's non-political dinner at the Queen's Hall. Much talk about the 'wicked uncles'—Beaverbrook and Rothermere—now being arm-in-arm again, and of Rothermere's renewed attacks on Baldwin and his prediction that Beaverbrook is the next man to lead the Government.

Jimmy Thomas was at the dinner, too, relieved (in more senses than one, no doubt) from his job as 'Unemployment Minister'. He did his rubber-stamp stuff about the Empire 'as a great 'eritage'. He was the only man at the dinner not in dress clothes. He could not resist chucking out a few damns and such-like explosives into his after-dinner oratory. This rough stuff makes the women laugh and causes my Australian friends to say 'he's a real feller'.

I found Lloyd George and Beaverbrook in a corner head to head. If I, as a Liberal editor, have any qualms about being seen at a Beaverbrook party, well, what about my Leader? They looked thick as thieves.

Beaverbrook moved off for a moment and I talked to Lloyd George.

'You have surely got to help our paper now,' I said, 'now that we are the only Liberal organ left in London.'

'Yes,' he said. 'How?'

'By writing your memoirs for us,' I replied. 'You are the only Great War statesman who has not yet done it.'

He has talked to me about this before. I think he is inclined to be indolent about it—wants to write his story, but finds farming too attractive to yield him the time or diligence. As we talked, up comes Beaverbrook again, crying, 'Here, what are you two plotting?'

H. G. Wells joins us—squeaky voice, and cutting a dash with the hero-worshipping ladies. He is not half so overpowering to meet as you would think from his printed word. As with all the giants—political, literary, or scientific—Shaw, Lloyd George, and Rutherford, for instance, come to mind—they cease to be heroes when you meet them. They talk trivialities like you and me. They are no longer Olympians, but common or garden. I passed a word or two with Wells about his clash with Northcliffe over War propaganda, which I mentioned in my book. He said, 'It is all correct.' He doesn't seem to be very much interested in what I have to say. His mind is on the dance and I think on the pageant of good-looking youth and beauty. So off he goes.

Then comes Sir Thomas Horder, the King's physician, a little dark, bright-eyed man, who, as I playfully pretend to hide my drink from him, says, 'Go on with it, otherwise the doctors would have nothing to do.'

Later in the evening Max Aitken, Beaverbrook's elder son, joins the dance with a party of bright young things. He pleads with me to do something to keep the dance going. 'They are about to stop,' he says, 'but if father sees you dancing he will let us go on.' So having been

young myself, I steal one of the slim young ladies and join in the whirl. Beaverbrook, to whom I have already said good night, looks surprised, so I hand the girl back to young Max and have another word with Beaverbrook. 'Why don't you repudiate Rothermere,' I say, 'and keep your Empire Crusade going on your own? Aren't you stronger without him?' 'Ah! But there is the value of the publicity,' he says.

Thursday, June 26th 1930. Went to Ipswich to-day to help receive the Prince of Wales at the Journalists' Convalescent Home, Oakhill, a lovely mansion and grounds overlooking the Orwell. The orders of the day to those of us to be presented include the following:

'Members will occupy the seats provided for them. They will rise as the Prince approaches and remain standing till he has passed, but they must not, on any account, leave their places.'

'No one but the President, etc., must enter the study.'

'These instructions must be adhered to rigidly by every one concerned. The secretary will generally act as "policeman".'

In the study there was whisky and soda: but the Prince would have none. He said he did not drink before evening. Some one said he would probably have preferred a steak and a tankard of ale. I'm sure he would. The Prince seemed nervous in the presence of the journalists. He stopped when I was presented as Chairman of the Overseas Committee of the Institute of Journalists and said: 'Oh, the Overseas Committee' as if desiring to show his interest in the Empire. As he was leaving, Mlle Valentine Chausson, daughter of the French Consul in Birmingham, was presented to him as a 'reward' for acting as interpreter to the journalists on a recent visit to France. He chatted with her in French vivaciously. 'Oh, what long eyelashes he has,' she said to me afterwards as we drove together to see the Wolsey Pageant. We got mixed up with the crowd and the young lady could not get to the seat that had been allocated her near the Prince. I sympathized with her as we could get

no forrader through the crowd. 'Oh, it *ees* annoying,' she said, 'but I have had my day, don't you say?'

Friday, June 26th 1930. Fixed up with Winston Churchill to buy first British serial rights of his *Memoirs* for publication in our paper. We are to take 25,000 words. It is first-rate stuff. I am sure the young people will like it. Besides we have made a good bargain and I think it should make Lloyd George jealous and help to bring him to heel in the matter of those *Memoirs* which I so badly want to scoop. Like women, politicians, too, are played off against each other.

Tuesday, July 3rd 1930. André Seigfreid, French author and professor, and famous commentator on the Anglo-Saxons, lunched with Layton and myself to-day. Seigfreid seems worried that England is losing her 'European Mind', and that if she went in for inter-Imperial Tariffs and that sort of thing, she would lose her international leadership and become 'Little England'. I told him that as things are going in the world it seemed to me that we in Britain had more in common with Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders than with Italians, Roumanians, Poles, Czechs, and Greeks—or even French and Germans.

It seemed curious that the day after that diary entry there came out a manifesto by some of our leading city bankers, including Reginald McKenna, once Liberal Chancellor and now head of the Midland Bank, saying they would support taxes on all imports from all countries. I have a diary entry:

Friday, July 4th 1930. The Liberal Free Traders seem to have no reply (to the manifesto) except worn-out theories and arguments that tariffs on imports will cut down the exports by which we live. 'Trade is not war,' they say. But I am afraid no more free traders are being born to-day, and the modern young man is saying, 'Our rivals have made a war of trade and we have had enough of the peace at any price school. We have turned the cheek often to the tariff slap, and it is time we slapped back.' Every one of our so-called Liberal Leaders, even Lloyd George himself, seems bemused. There is no

programme to satisfy the new and younger generation. I find my position as editor of a case-hardened Free Trade paper gets more difficult. The squabbling Leaders give me no message with which to support a crusade, except a threadbare one which no one listens to. I want to make the best newspaper case for them. I am trying to do that, but I wish I had better material, better evidence, better witnesses, and better support. The other side looks like getting away with it. . . . Beaverbrook has been tempting me again to chuck up my brief in Bouverie Street and take up one for him instead. It would be easier and much more lucrative, and the tiresome rows in the Liberal Party have tested my loyalties severely; but to go over, especially now, would look like leaving a ship in trouble just for gain.

I met Beaverbrook at luncheon a day or two after this, and among other things he said I was a fool not to have accepted his offer to join him a year before. I said, 'They would have said I had been bought.' He laughed—'But aren't you all for sale—aren't you?' I felt I had been struck, but when I recovered I saw that very probably he was right. He had stripped things of all humbug in a sentence. That was the real Beaverbrook. He went on to tell me not to mix politics with journalism. If your employer set a policy, and you accepted a job with him, it was your duty to carry it out. I gathered he meant that a journalist is like a barrister—he gets his brief and gets on with his job. I felt after my talk with him that he would like to be Prime Minister. Beaverbrook is also trying to capture A. J. Cummings, our political editor. He is quite straightforward about it. He has rung me up to say, 'I am going to disturb the balance of your young man Cummings. I am going to send him a letter. I do not do anything of that sort without letting you know. Is there any reason why I should not write to him? Do you approve?' I replied that Cummings was a free agent and no approval of mine was needed. Cummings came to my room not long afterwards and I told him what had happened. 'My answer can be given beforehand,' he said. 'I am not going to leave you.'

Monday, July 14th 1930. Went with H. A. Gwynne (editor *Morning Post*) as Institute of Journalists representative on deputation from Newspaper Proprietors' Association to Prime Minister MacDonald *re* Official Secrets Act. (See Tuesday, May 13th entry.) Lord Riddell our spokesman. Waited in dingy room which we did not think worthy of Prime Minister and which Esmond Harmsworth said was dull as all parts of Parliament were. We were taken to Prime Minister's sanctum—large square room—and sat at big yellow table opposite him—as if he were on a throne. Clynes was at his left (Home Secretary) looking more like Teddy Tail than ever with his penetrating little blue bright eyes. Sir William Jowitt (Attorney-General) long upper lip, hawk eyes, firm jaw like a rat-trap, looking every inch a future judge —severe and afraid to smile. I sat next to Esmond Harmsworth and got a side view of Riddell, who always reminds me of an emu with his long neck and roving eye. He put our case clearly and cleverly. MacDonald was less pompous than I expected. How nice he can be when he really wants to. I thought as I looked at him of that very nice letter he wrote to me in November 1927 thanking me for the kindly references in the *Daily News* to his illness, and his words: 'You move me greatly and help me over a weary road.' Not much help for the newspaper to-day, though, on *their* 'weary road' to escape the bureaucratic gag. Mac has got mostly 'bricks' for the Press now. We dub him the 'schoolmaster' for his hectoring autocratic ways and his resentment of the least suspicion of criticism. He was pleasant but unyielding to us to-day—and a bit rough I thought on Lord Riddell, leader of our deputation. Riddell asked if this interpretation of the Official Secrets Act which had led to the searching by police of the private papers of an unoffending reporter was in keeping with the Prime Minister's democratic ideas of the freedom of the Press. The Prime Minister dismissed the question with a gesture of impatience. Riddell fixed him with a cold eye and said:

'Forgive me saying it, but you can't expect to remain in perpetual power, and another Government of a

different complexion might very well welcome this weapon you are forging if they at any time desire to go through the private papers of, let us say, a well-known Socialist journalist living at Hampstead.'

Ramsay glowered and stiffened. He lives at Hampstead. Riddell's thrust had obviously awakened memories of the far back days when a Government would, perhaps, have gleefully employed this power of search against him had they possessed it.

Wednesday, August 6th 1930. How well I succeeded in healing the breach between our paper and Lady Oxford was shown to-day when I had a letter from her (in pencil as usual) saying she feared Lord Birkenhead was dying. It was as follows:

THE WHARF,
SUTTON COURTNEY,
BERKS.
August 4th 1930

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I fear Lord Birkenhead is dying, although I do not know how many days he may live I am writing a short notice of him (as I know him intimately) for a daily paper and thought you might like to have it for your paper before I offer it to another editor. Let me know here.

Yours in haste,
MARGOT OXFORD

I rang her up at Abingdon 97 and agreed to her proposal. Then came another letter:

THE WHARF,
SUTTON COURTNEY,
BERKS.
August 7th 1930

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I never forget any one who has been kind to me. Before accepting my article—on my poor friend Lord Birkenhead—I must tell you I want 100 guineas for it,

as I am writing a continuation of my recollections of famous men, and women (including King Edward, King George, and other Royal people that I have known) and everything I write for the Press diminishes the value of my book. As you know, I am not mercenary but I am poor, and can only keep my lovely little place here by writing. I have taken great pains with my article on Lord Birkenhead (who can not live long alas!) and no doubt the family will not be too pleased with it because I have spoken the truth about him, and I fear this always hurts some one. But false praise nails down every coffin, and when I die, I hope no one will do this about me.

Yours in haste,

MARGOT OXFORD

I wrote to her agreeing. I also suggested she should prepare for us another article about 'praising people falsely when they die'. She sent me the Birkenhead article and the following letters:

THE WHARF,
SUTTON COURTNEY,
BERKS.
August 9th 1930

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

This is the article; and I hope you will like it. Like you, I detest financial bargaining and the *Daily Mail* approached me to write for them (but I do not like the paper). I will certainly not reprint my article on Lord Birkenhead in my book. (I should look upon such an act as cheating.)

I would rather like to write an article on your idea of—'When I die I hope that no one will praise me falsely'; but this would take a great deal of time, and might hurt the publishers of my book.

I am very loyal to my publishers and the subject is too personal not to be of value in my new book.

Thank you for your charming letter.

Yours ever,

MARGOT OXFORD

THE WHARF,
SUTTON COURTNEY,
BERKS.
August 10th 1930

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

You know how little touchy I am—and how conscientious—so don't hesitate to criticize my article and say what you think. I think it is long enough, as the great thing is to have people say, 'I wish it was not so short'. I don't know if you are like me; but I find all films, plays, speeches, and persons too long.

Yours,
MARGOT OXFORD

In accordance with custom I sent Lady Oxford her 100 guineas cheque at once and received the following letter in reply:

THE WHARF,
SUTTON COURTNEY,
BERKS.
August 14th 1930

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

It is nice, and courteous of you to pay me beforehand. I always do this to my small dressmakers (as soon as I order a dress). I do not think people realize the difference that these things make in life.

Might I see my article in type or is this too much to ask?—I would like to be sure it was correct as the last one was not correct, and even one wrong word would worry me.

Yours in sincerity,
MARGOT OXFORD

The article was placed in what we journalists call 'the morgue', that is the place where the life stories of people of note are kept and brought up to date. It remained there until published in the *News Chronicle* on Wednesday, October 1st, the day after Lord Birkenhead's death. It made the 'splash' on our front page and occupied three columns. It was a brilliant and feeling piece of writing.

One part of the article that struck me read as follows:

'No one will controvert me when I say that Lord Birkenhead had a first-rate intellectual equipment. But I think what I said of him some years ago—that his brains had gone to his head—was true; because, like many men of mark, he exaggerated the value of cleverness.

'Though cleverness covers a certain amount of ground, it will not take you far enough to win the ultimate approval of long-sighted man.

'There is nothing more deceptive—and I might add unfortunate—than to make a cult of cleverness. It will always win the applause of a flattering circle of narrow, cultivated people; but those who possess it are inclined to believe that they are men of genius and in consequence allow themselves the latitude which they think is their due.

'We will always admire, but can never emulate genius; and though there is much that can be done with talent, there is little you can do with genius. In essence, genius is not a degree of kind, but a variation in type, and to few can we apply the word. The virtue that ultimately counts in the government of this or of any other country is character.'

Those passages struck me because I could not help remembering Lady Oxford's views on Lloyd George. "I'll bet she wants him to read that bit," I said to myself.

CHAPTER VIII

A Churchill Interlude—Youth Party at Lovely Westerham—A Roving Dialogue—The 'Lloyd George' Raspberries.

ONE of the men of affairs I had always wanted to meet and talk to was Winston Churchill. Our publication of his memoirs gave me the opportunity to spend an afternoon in his home at Westerham. My only previous face-to-face encounter with him had been at Manchester many years ago when I had reported the election in which Joynson-Hicks defeated him; and that was no occasion for getting to know him closely. I had also in July 1914, when on the news-desk at the *Daily Mail*, had a one-sided telegraphic contact with him on the question of mobilization of the British Fleet. One-sided because he, then the First Lord of the Admiralty, did not reply to my telegram sent to him at Overstrand, near Cromer, where he was on holiday, asking if it were true that while the German Fleet was concentrating our Fleet was demobilizing. Although my telegram remained unanswered Winston returned hurriedly to London that Sunday evening.

It was with some zest that after all these years I set off one Saturday morning following a letter from Winston saying 'we could run through the articles in the morning and I could give you luncheon. . . . This would be very nice.'

Saturday, August 9th 1930. Went to Winston Churchill's beautiful home at Westerham, overlooking the Kentish Weald, to arrange for the publication in the *News Chronicle* of his 'Memories of Youth'. Took Dennis (my son) with me in the hope of provoking talk about youth.

There was a small, intimate luncheon-party of young people. The conversation before, during, and after lunch, became often a duel between Winston and a youth of nineteen inclined towards Socialism, myself throwing in a pebble now and then. The talk ran something like this:

Myself. Your book is a romance that modern young people will feel they cannot afford to miss. That's why

I'm buying the serial rights. Now, if you had your life to live over again—with all the experience and knowledge you now possess—would you do the same things?

Churchill. Probably I would; but I would try to waste less time than I did in my early days. I wasted time until I was twenty-two. It was only then I got the desire for learning.

The Youth. Would you go in for politics?

Churchill. Probably not. Too much 'mush' about them to-day. No longer interesting. There are not the same chances. Our politicians are not the brilliantly dominant men they were. Business men have taken their place. The world is not the same. . . . My book, you realize, is the picture of a vanished world. . . . Everything is changed. Yet if I lived again I suppose I should do as I did before, make the same mistakes, miss the same chances which youth always so cheerfully and consistently ignores.

The Youth. What were *your* mistakes and missed chances?

Churchill. I did not acquire a love of learning till I was twenty-two. My time in the 4th Hussars was wasted. I wished I had gone to Oxford.

Myself. But Oxford might have so levelled your audacious spirit that you might have got learning at the expense of the adventure that is the keynote of your life. Besides, your 'marching pen' which brought successful authorship owes something to the influence of those early Army days.

Churchill (to the youth). I hear you are going to Oxford. It is no use going there without a genuine love of learning—wasting time in indolence. I tried to make up for lost time when I was twenty-two. I started by reading Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* I read it right through three tree times. (Here he quoted a great portion of Chapter XIV from memory.) Every young man ought to read it.

The Youth. Why?

Churchill. It gives you a picture of the greatness—the tragedy—of human life in the finest English.

The Youth. Would you *care* to live your life again?

Churchill. Very much—but not from the beginning. I would like to start at twenty. Thence to twenty-five are the best years. The whole world is then before you. I would not like my schooldays over again. I did not enjoy school. I had no love of learning then. I wanted to follow my own bent and paid little attention to studies. The coercion of school was distasteful.

The Youth. And you wish you had been at a university?

Churchill. Yes, but I think youth ought to see something of the world between leaving school and entering a university. A boy ought to be allowed to choose his own path.

Myself. Should not the parent have some say in that matter?

Churchill. In these days it makes no difference if they try. Modern young people will do as they like. The only time parents control children is before they are born. After that children have the major influence on their parents. Look at my youngest daughter there. She rides like a Juggernaut over every obstacle I put up. (The young lady with the auburn hair and blue eyes smiled indulgently.)

The Youth. Have you *enjoyed* your life?

Churchill. Every minute of it since my schooldays. I have mostly done what I most wanted.

The Youth. That's all very well, but we can't all do that. You had advantages.

Churchill. (Throwing some salt over his left shoulder because he had spilled some on the table.) True, I had a name. But I had lack of funds. I made my opportunities and then took them.

Myself. You had qualities of push and go which are not given to all young men, you know.

Churchill Except for my name, all the rest I had to work for, to fight for. When I was twenty-two, with my small Army pay not covering expenses, I realized that I was handicapped and unable to live my life as I wanted to. I wanted learning and I wanted funds. I wanted freedom. I realized that there was no freedom without

funds. I had to make money to get essential independence; for only with independence can you let your own life express itself naturally. To be tied down to some one else's routine, doing things you dislike—that is not life—not for me. Give me independence. Every young man should make that his motto. So I set to work. I studied. I wrote. I lectured. I got my freedom. I can hardly remember a day when I have had nothing to do. I am always busy.

The Youth. What about the lighter side of life? Tell me, for instance, do you play bridge?

Churchill. No.

The Youth. Funny that so few men of brains do. Now what about politics?

Churchill. Mush! I am troubled about the state of things in this country. Nobody seems to care. Yet there is a hard strain of tenacity and stability in the background of our English make-up, and I have faith. I am not afraid of the future.

Myself. What about the dole?

Churchill. The principle of the dole for the bread-winner is sound, but to give it broadcast to men, women, and children so indiscriminately is terrible. It is undermining to our young people. Let the head of the family—the bread-winner—be entitled to some support; but not every Tom, Dick, and Jane in the land.

The Youth. You would not advise young men to go in for politics, then?

Churchill. I did not say that, but I don't believe there are the chances there used to be. Nowadays it is neither action nor thought, but 'mush'. Take this matter of the Simon Report on India. That report is an embodiment of thought, but it is disregarded in favour of a sentimental Round Table Conference out of which it is hoped something tangible will emerge and be given to the Indians. In the old days it was action and force. Now it ought to be thought and intellect, but it isn't. The House of Commons hasn't even read the Simon Report. They can't understand it. Distinguished men have given two years of their lives to the study of an intricate problem

and the result of their labours is discarded in favour of mush. It was force that gave us India. It is intellect that ought to keep it.

The Youth. You are thoroughly opposed to Socialism, I suppose?

Churchill. I am indeed. You will not see Socialism in this country without civil war.

The Youth. But aren't the English people too sensible for that?

Churchill. Yes, I think they are. That's why you will never have Socialism. If it were really threatened there is a great mass of steady people here, not very articulate, who would just take off their coats to stop it. They would fight. *I* would fight. I would probably be one of the first to be killed; but a lot of others would be killed first. Socialism means the downfall of English culture. . . .

The Youth. But Russia?

Churchill. Russia does not take shackles off mankind. It puts new ones on. There is no parallel, as you suggest, between the French and Russian revolutions. Napoleon reintroduced civilization to France.

The Youth. But isn't the present capitalistic order of things breaking down—because it doesn't fit the new intelligence of mankind? I think a lot of us young people are thinking that way.

Churchill. More mush! Capitalism will right itself. What is Capitalism? It is merely the observance of contract, that's all. That's why it will survive. At present it is depressed all over the world. It is not symptomatic of failure as you suppose.

Myself. Now what about your book of youthful memoirs, Mr. Churchill?

Churchill. I feel it is my finest book. I hope young people will like it. I have enjoyed writing it as much as I enjoyed living most of it; and I am glad the *News Chronicle* which has led the way in interpreting post-War life for youth, and giving expression to its views, its hopes and fears, should be the first medium through which I tell the story of my adventurous younger days.

Myself. We are going to ask your young readers to

criticize your story: and to offer a start in the career of journalism—a twelve month's trial in the *News Chronicle*—to the most promising writer-critic.

Churchill. That's fine. I should like to help in judging that competition. What an opportunity for some ambitious young man. (*Note:* Winston did help in that competition and afterwards sent me an autographed copy of his book, with the Puckish inscription 'First Prize —Tom Clarke'.)

Winston took us for a stroll to see the view across the valley to the weald; to see his haymakers, his new-born pigs, his 'Lloyd George raspberries' and the famous brick wall which he built with his own hands, putting into practice his theory that thought and toil go to make completeness in the daily round.

It was all very homely—this intimate Kentish landscape, the hay and the pigs, and Winston's eight-year-old daughter calling us to see her 'Wendy' house near the lake. It seemed so remote from the adventures and hectic vicissitudes, at home and abroad, of the audacious Winston Churchill of legend.

The setting and the hero, were homely and gentle, bringing curiously comfortable thoughts to those of us whose life paths have been more placid. Here was the hero settled down with no pose of majesty or attack, but in lounge suit, hands shoved, as is the rural way, inside trouser-tops; smoking a cigar and discussing crops. I must have thought aloud, for Churchill turned to me and said: 'If I lived again? Independence! The home you want! Like this! And getting married and living happily ever after.'

'How did you like Winston?' people asked when I got back. Well, I like him as I like all outstanding men or women. He's a tonic. He was enthusiastic as a boy about his book and much impressed with what we were spending on our publicity scheme—'more than we are paying you'—I said. He told me he thought Rothermere would be annoyed, as he had read the book and had suggested the *Daily Mail* should get it. Although there was nothing of the great 'I Am' about Winston, it struck me there was complete

absence of humility. He was proud of his life of adventurous audacity. Now and then I detected a 'thus far and no farther' note when my journalistic inquisitiveness got the better of me. He had a Cabinet Minister's way of sidestepping topics he would rather not discuss—until he decided they were to his taste. As, for instance, when I raised the matter of the telegram I had sent him at Overstrand on the eve of war in 1914. It took me four tries to make him listen to the story, because, I felt, he was not sure what it was going to be. I mentioned my own book about Northcliffe, and how I was being asked to cut things against my wish. 'That is the hardest thing,' he said, 'but we must all do it. I once knew a doctor who out of necessity to save his life had to cut off his own thumb . . . easy to cut others off, not one's own. I hate to cut my own stuff, but others cut it for me sometimes'—Mrs. Churchill wasn't at the luncheon, which was late. Winston kept pausing under the dining-room window and calling out to the kitchen about it. At length he strode off to investigate, and returned to say that the aspic had not set and he had ordered it to be served as it was. Then we had Irish stew (very good, two helpings each) with a light hock as beverage. . . . Feel I've had a great day.

CHAPTER IX

Talk with Lord Riddell—Shadow of the 'Great Depression'—Lloyd George and his Forlorn Party—Whispering Enemies—'He is Finished'—Resurgence in the Air—The 'Co-op' at Admiralty House—Lady Oxford Again—Lloyd George's Two Dinner Parties—Talks on Labour, Royalty, Winston, and War.

TUESDAY, *January 6th 1931.* Went to see Lord Riddell, venerable chairman of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, in convalescence after his operation. He lives in the house at 20, Queen Anne's Gate, where Palmerston was born. He was lying in bed in a room overlooking the Park—not his usual bedroom, for I'm told he has a tiny place of his own at the top of the house, with a truckle-bed and two telephones to keep touch with his many activities day and night. One can't help having an affection for Riddell and his agreeable lady. He has a very alert mind and a tongue ever ready with quip or story. 'Yes—it makes you think,' he said referring to his operation ordeal, 'how near we all are to the precipice. There, but for the grace of God. It makes you rather humble. . . . Yet how soon we forget.' He talked of the growth of 'Punditism' in our affairs—economic and political. What was wrong was the trade barriers. America was complaining that she couldn't sell her stuff. Good gracious, why? Because her tariffs prevented us sending in goods to pay for them. I told him he ought to join our staff as a leader writer, with such Radical Free Trade views. 'Yes,' he said, 'but the trouble is people don't *want* direct statements like that. I have the misfortune to be a very direct person in most things. In New York I got into trouble for demanding plain and direct statements for the Press. It's my belief now, after years of experience, that our British success is due to the lack of directness of those who conduct our affairs. Real brains are often a handicap. Look at many of our diplomats and viceroys. When you get a clever, direct man like Reading there is trouble. The rather stupid haw-haw-man whose sole attributes are social grace, courage,

coolness in an emergency—guided by advisers—but very little brains—he is the success. Arthur Balfour said as much to me in New York. "Directness and direct statements, my dear Riddell, are dangerous. You should go roundabout, leaving alternatives, never committing yourself. Then you always have a way out to retire if the situation gets awkward, whereas a direct statement might lead you into a war."' Riddell also spoke of Sir John Reith of the B.B.C. 'Of course he is a good personal friend of mine, but we often come into collision as you know. He is a curious chap—a very clever chap and rather autocratic.' Reith is the man who not long ago said he wasn't going to give the public what it wants, but what he thinks they should have. In our paper for this we soundly rated him. I met him the other night. He's an overpowering fellow, with a six-foot presence, and looks rather like Mussolini. You generally find him at parties standing alone in a corner—detached from the rest as if he were not of the party and did not know what to do there. Riddell said to me: 'When I look at him I feel he's the sort of chap who, if you told him the Viceroyalty of India was vacant, would say, "Now that's just the sort of job I could fill!" And he would! He *would* be able to fill it and do the job very well. He's only forty-one, you know. He'll go a long way.'

I enjoyed my afternoon with Riddell. He's the most picturesque figure in Fleet Street. He spoke of Henry Cadbury leaving Bouverie Street and said he thought it a shabby thing that after some twenty-five years Fleet Street allowed him to pass out so quietly. I said he was a shy man who no doubt preferred it that way. Riddell is Father Confessor to lots of us in Fleet Street—knows all our secrets. He told me to-day there was not enough humour in the papers. He says his best reading is reports of dinners. He gets all the fullest reports because none of the stories ever get in the papers. He told me of a witty speech the other day by J. B. Priestley, with priceless copy in one or two of his after-dinner stories. Yet not a line in the papers! Riddell himself is a great after-dinner speaker and always in demand for his stories. He

is a kindly philosopher with a shrewd knowledge of human nature and the world—and a very keen sense of value. For instance, when I asked him would *he* take a bigger offer to go elsewhere if he were me? 'Well,' he said, 'there are two things. (1) Money talks. (2) But there are others things. I reckon you are happy where you are because for one thing you *do* know where you are. (Do I?) That's a lot. Still there's no reason why you should not tell your people of these offers and say while you realize they have not the money others have still, there it is, and you have to think of Mrs. Tom and the children. . . . But you are quite right. Money is not all—by a long way, though we all like it; and loyalty to your employers and your undertakings with them brings to you that which is worth more to you in the long run than money—Repute! It's an old saw, that, Clarke, but I can tell you it's true.' There was a touch of loneliness about him as he went on: 'I've made all the money I want. I've got a title. What are these things really? I have no children. I can't do anything much with my money. I can't take it with me. I was saying the other day regarding some payment we were haggling about—"Why should I worry about a few pounds, or a few hundred pounds?" ' He told me about his early days as a lawyer. 'I came into the newspaper game because I was asked to be peacemaker between some newspaper directors, and I suppose I did it so well they asked me to join the Board. . . .' He said you don't make money in journalism or any other job out of salaries. 'You ought to be thinking about that,' he said, 'you don't always want to be dependent on a salary.' I said I felt I would always be able to write, even after salaries ceased. He said, 'Yes, but what slavery that would be . . . and to have to keep going always. . . . If you go away for a while you are forgotten and when you come back the new young writers have your place. To think you would have to go on always writing to earn your living—that would be melancholy.' I told him that Lloyd George seemed to be doing good business out of his writing and he agreed, but changed the subject to talk again of

newspapers in general. He mentioned his own paper, the *News of the World*. He said he knew what some superior people said about it, 'but as a newspaper we have a better coverage than others of more pretence. . . . You see, I am a reporter.' I know that Riddell is like Northcliffe was in the way he acts as a reporter for his own paper. I believe the 'Secret History of the Week' is mostly done by him. He knows everybody and very little happens behind the scenes but what he gets wind of it. He got great relish out of telling me a tale against himself: 'You know my friends say to me, "Riddell, when you get to the Gates of Heaven and St. Peter says, 'Oh, you are Riddell of the *News of the World*', what are you going to say?" And I tell them my reply will be, "Oh, sir, of *John o' London's Weekly*, too!" ' As I was leaving I asked him how he enjoyed his work as Chairman of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. He made it clear it was the thing nearest his heart. He spoke very highly of the secretary T. W. McAra (*Note:* now Sir Thomas) especially in negotiations with the trade unionists. 'Mac was once one of them, and they know him and trust him. They tell me he understands them and they don't mind a lecture from him. He puts us bosses in our place, too, and he's worth every penny he gets. Do you know there are more trade unions connected with the newspaper business than any other and you can't get along without friction unless you have somebody knowing the whole negotiations game from A to Z . . .? That's Mac.'

Winston Churchill's references to the current 'mush' of politics had taken my mind back to Lloyd George. I had not been in touch with him for some time. After that 1929 election, with the party's forlorn spurt under a sham banner of unity, he had kept in the background. Liberalism had drifted into the doldrums again. The party dissidents had retired to their respective quarters to sulk. In comparative peace I was left to run my newspaper and gave more time to news than party politics.

By the end of 1930 Lloyd George seemed to have

temporarily faded from my diary. The Labour Government was still in office, thanks to the disinclination of Lloyd George, whose handful of Liberals held the balance of power, to put them out. There had been recurring tales of his ill health. People were whispering that he was 'finished'. His friends didn't want to believe it, yet they wondered. All the time the shadow of the Great Depression was creeping over the horizon. The security of the Labour administration was threatened not only by this, but by the embarrassing differences in its own ranks and the disparagement of any 'working arrangement', however vague, with the despised Liberals. Unemployment figures had got beyond 2,300,000. George Lansbury, then in the Cabinet, was calling for the application of Christianity to industry and commerce in connexion with a coal dispute in South Wales. He sent me a letter on the subject for publication. Joynson-Hicks (by this time Lord Brentford) rose to the bait and replied, 'For God's sake don't let us mix politics with religion. He who shall not work shall not eat. There's nothing in the Bible about a 7½ hours' day. Religion is an individual matter.' And Bernard Shaw joined in at my invitation, saying, 'George Lansbury is a Christian without conditions, out and out after Christ's own heart; Lord Brentford is a Christian subject to the limitations of English gentility, which from Lansbury's point of view means that he might just as well not be a Christian at all. Hence George's Communism and Lord Brentford's appearance as antichrist.'

But I am straying from my point—that Lloyd George seemed to be preparing for a 'come-back'. Life in the old dog yet! He began picking up anew the strings he had allowed to run slack.

Sunday, January 18th 1931. Returning to-night from a week-end at Aldwick I telephoned the office and found they had had from Lloyd George a copy of a letter he had sent to *The Times*. Our people had decided not to print it because it was thought libellous. I had it read over to me on the 'phone and gave instructions for it to appear, and with prominence. The letter refers to the United

States Debt Settlement, which Lloyd George says Baldwin bungled. *The Times* attacked Lloyd George for this, and, so he alleges, did not quote him fairly. He sent them a letter suggesting they should apologize and in a somewhat pompous leader they refused. Lloyd George now writes about 'gentlemen' and accuses *The Times* of journalistic dishonesty.

Monday, January 19th 1931. *The Times* printed Lloyd George's letter with some acid comment that even on his birthday he could not be allowed such extravagances. Among other things he had referred to the American Hearst Press (*Note:* for which he was writing) as HIRST, and *The Times* let it go like that all through the letter—obviously a sly dig at Lloyd George's 'ignorance'. I cabled for Hearst's comment on the dispute and got the reply to-night, 'Hearst prefers not to intervene *Times*–George dispute'.

Sunday, January 25th 1931. The Labour Government want to push through the Trades Disputes Bill. Lloyd George, still head of the Liberal Opposition which holds the balance as long as this Parliament lasts, favours giving it a second reading. Otherwise, as he sees it, out goes the Government and in come the Tories. Then the fat would be in the fire. They would attack the 'dole', dragoon India, set up Tariffs, and 'tame' the Trade Unions. Tory Garvin apparently is not aware of Lloyd George's views, for in to-day's *Observer* he sings eulogies of him and suggests that the Tories should make a solid compromise with Liberalism as 'the only way on earth to turn out the Cabinet and establish instead a strong National Government'. He deprecates the way Mr. Baldwin's friends have been goading Lloyd George with odium and petty indignities.

Tuesday, February 10th 1931. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, made a speech at Newcastle during the week-end, and, regarding Disarmament, said we must not go too quickly except in collective agreement with others. As last night Arthur Henderson, the Foreign Minister, launched a great campaign for Disarmament, our paper took the opportunity this morning

to tease Alexander for his 'Put the clock back' speech. He rang me up to-day and asked me to lunch with him at Admiralty House. In that stately establishment the Labour Chief of the Royal Navy talked to me as we ate fried steak and onions (most delicious) and apple dumpling ('My favourite dishes, these,' he said). I told him we suspected the Admiralty officials had worn him down and that he was now becoming their mouthpiece—the fate of every First Lord in history. He indignantly denied this—'You know me too well, T. C.,' he said, 'to believe that of me.' He said he was as much in favour of disarmament as our paper was, but facts and realities had to be faced. If there were not collective agreement on disarmament—well, there came a 'steady-up' point—and we were 'damned near it.' I admire and respect Alexander. A Labour man at the Admiralty must have a difficult job. I see him as a possible Socialist leader—and we could do far worse. He is, of course, in the first place a Co-operative. He says the 'Co-op' is the only alternative to a Fascist or a Communist state. The 'Co-op' movement, he says, is not necessarily Socialist, but was driven into politics against its will during the War when Lord Devonport was appointed Food Controller and the 'Co-ops' were discriminated against, although they represented seven million consumers. The Tories and Liberals turned them down, so they turned to Labour. Alexander is the first 'Co-op' First Lord we have had. He told me to-day he would never leave the 'Co-op' movement. From what he said to me I gather that his £5,000 a year as First Lord (less the economy cut) is barely enough for running such a place as Admiralty House in the old style, and that at first he had decided to 'live out'. The Navy heads implored him to keep it up in traditional style in the interests of the country, but he's only been able to manage it by cutting the staff to a minimum. Also he introduced the 'Co-op' to Admiralty House, and I suppose the 'divi' has helped his wife, who took on the running of the household, to make ends meet. She's a remarkable woman is Mrs. Alexander, black hair and black eyes and tight, determined lips—as if 'on guard and ready' all the

time. I wonder how much these men who come up from the masses owe to their wives.

Saturday, February 21st 1931. At Oxford for the Torpids. No signs of depression here among the eager, carefree youth. . . . The new cry is for a 'National Party' . . . Australia almost bust . . . America under economic blizzard. . . . Rumblings in Europe. . . . Russia's Five Year Plan said to be well ahead of schedule. . . . Where are *we* going? . . . Liberals at the bottom of the poll in last week's East Islington by-election. Socialists top of poll. Beaverbrook's Empire Crusader a good second.

On the lines of that last diary entry I talked to A. J. Cummings and asked if it were not time we tried to stir up the Liberal leader out of his rural somnolence. He told me Lloyd George had been inquiring for his views on the dismal failure of the Liberal candidate at East Islington. Cummings had written him a bellyful, telling him that he ought to be up and doing; ought to have gone in person to Islington, among the people 'setting the heather alight like Beaverbrook'.

The political riddle turned mainly on the issue whether Liberalism should continue to flirt with Labour or not. I have a note of a conference with Layton in February 1931. His view I took to be, though it was none too sharply defined, that we had to keep alive the Liberal idea, the Free Trade idea, even if it meant temporary all-round sacrifices in the wages of capital as well as labour; we had to be Spartans; Beaverbrook's 'Empire Free Trade' policy and its lure of higher wages had to be opposed tooth and nail. It was the road to Britain's suicide as a world trading power. Personally I felt that any policy admitting the need for wage sacrifices—even if investors had to suffer too—would complete the eclipse of Liberalism among the rank and file. If, however, such policy were inevitable, I felt we ought to say so, proclaiming the truth and demanding that it be faced. There was one snag about that, I was reminded. By some 'Act of God', which no economist could forecast or explain, commodity prices might start moving upward, and that would be the end of the economic blizzard, and there

would be no need for the sacrifices indicated. Whatever party was in power when that happened would claim credit for the improvement in trade. That sent our talk into the 'wobbles' again. But I queried whether we could afford to wait for that 'Act of God' without doing anything in the meantime. Could we not come to some compromise on a revenue tariff to meet the special economic troubles of the moment? Other countries went on erecting their trade barriers and we were helpless against them. Then there was the League of Nations question. Geneva seemed in danger of losing its moral grip on international affairs. My frankly expressed personal position was that while I was a firm believer in the League idea, if it failed, there was nothing for it in the interests of our own self-preservation and our democratic freedom—and maybe the peace of the world—but a quick and determined restoration of our fighting forces to unchallengable strength. On the whole, I saw no chance of a Liberal–Labour alliance. It was not that the Socialists would not have Lloyd George: they would not have Liberalism at all. They did not trust it. They preferred to march alone. At the same time I saw as little chance of a Liberal–Tory working agreement. The policy indicated for us seemed to be a vigorous, independent Liberalism. If it had to die, it had better die crusading for what it believed in.

I look back to-day on the confusion of that period as on a nightmare. I probably took it all much too seriously. I'm sure of that when I re-read a diary entry of a riotous night at the Dominion Theatre seeing the première of Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*. None of the leaders of our public life whom Charlie had coralled for exhibition to the common gaze in the dress circle seemed to be worrying about the great world depression looming in the background. Even Prime Minister MacDonald had felt able to take the comedian as his guest for a week-end at Chequers. In the theatre sat Lady Astor and Sir Philip Sassoon; Bernard Shaw as chief guest on Charlie's right. There was Labour Minister Clynes. There was Winston Churchill, who, at a £5,000 party at the Carlton after the show proposed Chaplin's health as the man who had fascinated the whole human race.

There was Lady Oxford dancing a foxtrot with Charlie. There were scores of peers and statesmen, social climbers and highbrows, all seeking to be illuminated in the radiant presence of the world's King of Comedy. And the same papers that reported all this jollity told of the hissing of Sir Josiah Stamp at the L.M.S. meeting by shareholders wanting dividends.

March 6th 1931. A letter from Lady Oxford:

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1,
March 6th 1931

Dear Mr. Clarke,

I could write you a wonderful article on 'the Stage'—all the great actors and actresses I've seen—Irving, Ellen Terry, Coquelin, Sarah Bernhardt, Duse, etc., and compare with Film Charlie Chaplin, Bohemian Society; suppers, quarrels, etc. I would like £100 and would take trouble—you would have to say how many words. Just now every one talks of plays, silent films, or 'talkies'. The King, with whom I had tea on Tuesday, talked for two hours to me on plays, politics, and films etc.

Yours hastg,
Margot Oxford

I do not remember what reply I sent to this letter but it would appear that I suggested that she should write two articles for the £100.

Lady Oxford replied:

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1,
March 12th 1931

Dear Mr. Clarke,

I never write for less than £100 an article, and can't write two for you on actors. One is quite enough.

Yours, haste,
Margot Oxford

Back to the political scene—and the re-emergence of Lloyd George:

Monday, March 9th 1931. To-night in the Chinese Room at the Hotel Metropole I dined with Lloyd George, along with Sir Walter Layton, Sir Archibald Sinclair (Chief Liberal Whip), A. J. Cummings, and Stuart Hodgson. The other day Tweed told Cummings that Lloyd George was very angry with Sir John Simon, who, he says, has been playing with the idea of some change in our fiscal system. Lloyd George says that Simon has been to see Lord Reading and tried to get him over on Tariffs and India. Lloyd George says he's going to hit out at Simon in a speech in a few days. He seems to resent Simon's coming to the Liberal Shadow Cabinet meetings. I had asked Hodgson to go and see Lloyd George and get him to give us news of his proposed attack. Lloyd George said he could not do that and he wanted to wait to give Simon the chance of drawing his foot back; but he made no secret about his anger, and he ended by telling Hodgson to arrange to-night's dinner-party. Lloyd George was fresh and lively—merry of eye, and in a very good temper. He told us about the state of the Liberal Party and why Labour should remain in office. If there were an election now Liberal and Labour would be wiped off the slate and the Tories would come in. That was because of trade depression which no Government in power could survive at an election. Did we want to extinguish the Liberal Party? There was no pact with Labour. The Trade Disputes Bill had given a bit of trouble and at one time thirty of his followers had decided to vote with Simon, but he (Lloyd George) reduced them to two. As for electoral reform there was no pact either. Labour supported it because Arthur Henderson saw the alternative vote would in many cases be good for Labour. The possible election date was August 1932, and the probable one of the spring of 1933. He was sure trade would be on the upgrade before August 1932—there were signs now—and the Protectionist wave, already a little weakened, would then be properly receding. The example of depression as bad as our own in Protectionist countries was having its effect. People might say all this was tactics. Well, it was all so difficult to explain, but they had to have tactics. Lloyd

George seemed impressed with Mosley's 'national' group. When I mentioned India Lloyd George agreed that it was essential to get that question settled, and said that if this Government went out, all the good work would be undone and there would be reaction and probably bloodshed in India. Layton said we must keep alive the Liberal idea; programmes without an ideal got us nowhere. Lloyd George talked about Australia—about which he seemed very pessimistic. I mentioned the R.C. Archbishop Mannix, whom he had prevented from landing in England, during the War. 'Yes,' he laughed, 'I'm always meeting people who say I clapped them in jail. That's one of the disadvantages of the part I had to play in the War.'

March 19th 1931. Not very helpful of Ramsay Muir, at a time when Liberalism needs all the goodwill it can get from the journalists, to write of the Press in the *Newspaper World* as being mainly run by second-class brains. I called Lloyd George's attention to this, suggesting that his lieutenants might be better advised, and he replies that this 'diatribe against modern journalists was probably written in a fit of irritation and I hope you will treat him indulgently'.

March 25th 1931. After E. D. Simon, J. M. Keynes, Sir John Simon—now Sir Josiah Stamp joins the band of intellectual Liberal Free Traders who are hoisting the 'Revenue Tariff' banner. Lloyd George will have none of it and is trying to rally again the split Liberal Party.

April 14th 1931. Dined with Lloyd George at the Metropole to-night and found him in his very best form. Stuart Hodgson and Colonel Tweed the only other people present. I told Lloyd George several times during the talk that he ought to engage a shorthand writer to listen to him. He said perhaps that was not a bad idea as he found writing terribly laborious and the article he had to write once a month for the American papers was a nightmare to him. He looked younger and brighter-eyed than ever, and sat talking on from 7.30 till after eleven on people and politics, places and events. There was the

news of King Alfonso's dethronement and exit from Spain and that led me to ask about Kings and Prime Ministers; whether our King, for instance, ever discussed the trend of public thought on royalty. 'He really gets very little of the right and true sort of information,' said Lloyd George. 'In my time Basil Thomson was one of his chief pipe-lines. Thomson would send him dossiers about men plotting here and there—his discoveries about Communist activities. And the King would say to me: "What do you think of this?" And I would laugh and say, "Well, sir—that is not where the danger lies. I should have no sleepless nights about that sort of stuff." He paid too much attention to these reports about a few hotheads blowing off steam. Stamfordham, too, was just the Army officer type seeing things through the wrong sort of spectacles for a king's interpreter under a democracy and constitution like ours. The King paid too much attention to him. King Edward was much better served by Knollys—a wise old bird who understood the people and had a real sense of humour. . . .'

We talked of Winston and his book, *The World Crisis*. I asked if the facts about Lloyd George's Agadir speech (*Note:* His warning to Germany when the Kaiser sent a warship to Morocco in 1911) were correct and he said they were. He said he saw how things were going with Germany and he went to the Prime Minister (Asquith) with a draft of what he proposed saying at the Guildhall. Asquith said, 'We must of course get Grey on this.' Grey came in and modified the phraseology a bit—'he loved drafting reports and documents in ponderous style: he spent half his time at Cabinet meetings drafting this or that and often paying little attention to the discussions. Both he and Asquith were pleased I had suggested making this reference in my speech. They felt some one ought to do it and were secretly pleased I had taken the initiative. The next day Asquith sent for me to tell me the Germans demanded my dismissal . . . the speech had astounded and offended them. It had achieved its object in letting them see we meant business. It stopped war. If only something similar had been done in July 1914 there would

have been no war. If Bonar Law had said something of the sort to show that all our parties could be solid in resisting threatened aggression, and that we were to be reckoned as ready to take our part with France—what a lot of history would have been altered!'

I led him on to talk of the War and the terrible days when the German submarines seemed to be succeeding. Lloyd George's face hardened. His mind had gone back to those days of stress and fateful decision—when this little man carried the burden of our destiny. He spoke contemptuously of 'Wilson'.

'You mean the Field-Marshal?'

'Not I,' he said, 'the other fellow—the "Peace Wilson", the American President who thought making war was simply declaring it, and couldn't imagine that war meant killing people—meant troopships and training men, and bayonets, guns and destroyers and all those dreadful things. The time came when I had to send him a telegram—a terrible telegram. It will be printed one day. One had to send it to bring him and his peace-mind down to realities. I demanded men and guns for France. He saw at last the coming disaster and said he would send the soldiers if we could let him have the ships. Imagine that, when we had only six weeks' supply of food in this country and the submarines were sinking thousands of tons of our shipping per month. I called in Macleay: I called in the food experts. I put the position to them. "Can we let the Americans have the ships?" I said, "Can you do it?" They told me the risk. We explored the position with regard to cattle and pigs and potatoes and so on. Could we take the risk? I had to decide. I did. I let the Americans have the ships. It was a terrible risk, but it came off. . . . Don't ask me how I felt. The same about the convoy system. Jellicoe was against it: said the ships could not keep step. I told him our tramps had the best seamen in the world—as good as any in the warships or the liners. They and their little ships knew more about the sea than any of them. I had to order the experts to adopt the convoy system. A civilian had to point the way—had to order it. Again a

great risk, in face of professional opposition. Again it came off and beat the submarines.'

He went on to talk of and to praise the great German war effort—'a great people: you cannot wipe out a people like that. They nearly beat the world.' I mentioned the picture I had seen that day at the British Movietone News Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue of the German *Stahlhelms* on parade in Berlin—of its portent of the war spirit. 'Yes,' he said, 'the only comfort from that picture would be the reflection that in the next war they might be on your side, Clarke.'

'Well,' I said, 'I'll bet they daren't show that picture in Paris.'

'No,' he said, 'I remember Bethmann-Hollweg saying to me in Berlin in 1913 that France would never be satisfied until every German had been castrated.'

He told me how sadly the Germans misread us even then. Hollweg said to him that the trouble with the English was that they never worked seriously. They started their week-end on Thursday night and came back on Wednesday morning.

'I'm a Celt,' said Lloyd George, 'but I say the English are a wonderful people, an unbeatable people once they are aroused. They are wonderful. It's rubbish, because of the present depression, to talk of them being down and out. Sheer nonsense. At the moment there is lethargy—and slackness in business, in thought, in politics. Instead of getting down to the big things, the fundamentals—as they will do, make no mistake, all in good time—they have at the moment quackeries everywhere—quackeries like Empire Free Trade and Revenue Tariffs. I believe they will get all clear and come through strong and challenging. A great and wonderful people—make no mistake about that.'

I said: 'Bonar Law—you liked him, didn't you?'

'Yes—he was so gloomy he made me cheerful. . . . But he was always good to talk to. I would go in to see him and he would say, "Look here, Lloyd George, what do you think of these for troubles?" And he would recite them off one after the other, getting gloomier and gloomier

as he went on. And then I would say, "Well, Bonar, now what about this lot?" And I would tell him mine. And I would be so refreshed and comforted that I could come away feeling quite happy after our debauch of gloom. For things could never be really so bad as all that.'

I said to Lloyd George, 'What time of life does a man begin to feel old? You had a gruelling time. Did you never feel it was getting you down?'

'I did,' he replied. 'You never go down all at once; but you begin to get aches in the head—behind the eyes—and if you go on you get nervous breakdowns ever so often. That is the sign that you have used up—or are in danger of using up—your resources. I got like that. Neuralgia—pains behind the eyes—sleeplessness. And I went to see an old Welsh oculist friend of mine—he is alive yet—and he said very seriously: "You have got to stop—got to give it all up." I was beginning to feel old but I began to ration my time better—got out in the fresh air more—golf at Walton Heath, my farm and so on. And I got over it.'

'You did,' I said, 'I never saw you looking so well as you are to-night.'

'Well, I had seventeen years of it,' he said, 'seventeen years without a break, including the Prime Ministership during the War—with all the big decisions to be met—seventeen years. I do not know how I stood it.'

He talked of Haig and Foch. Haig, he said, was just a good department head—a good City accountant, but of no great vision or leadership. 'He could not make a clear statement to save his life, but he could write it. He fumbled pathetically at our councils—could not express himself or explain; but he could put it in writing. Foch was a great man, a great leader, a military genius. Haig could never have been in the same class. He was pedestrian, unimaginative—a real good, loyal fellow, of course, and a first-class man at his routine job—nothing more. When in the last attack Foch wanted some of Haig's men (and Haig opposed) I asked Foch a question. I knew I should get an honest, truthful reply. I asked

whether military or political necessity dictated his demand that Haig should deplete his forces on behalf of the French push. I wanted to know whether the politicians in Paris were telling him Paris must be protected at all costs. I could not have blamed them. Imagine the Germans forty miles from London. We should want all at costs to use the troops to prevent its capture. Foch replied to me that his request was dictated only by military necessity. So I gave the word in his favour. Otherwise no.'

I asked Lloyd George, 'Supposing Foch had not been the man, could you have appointed Haig as Allied Commander-in-Chief under your uniting of command scheme?'

'I could not,' he replied. 'Not in any case could you have appointed a foreigner to control the armies in France. Think of it . . . impossible. But it was fortunate France produced a Foch. I cannot think of one other who could have done.'

He told me how he used to keep in touch with the progress of events in the Commons. 'I will tell you how Winston used to fail. . . . My informant would telephone me, "No need to hurry or worry. Winston is making a brilliant speech. Is carrying the House with him. He is coming to the end. All is fine," and I would go on with my golf or whatever relaxation I was pursuing. Fifteen minutes later: "Not so good. Winston has run up another avenue. Both sides of the House are scowling. He has spoilt it."'

I remarked that I was no politician, but just a simple citizen.

'Don't talk to me like that,' snapped Lloyd George. 'It is all wrong. Politicians are really very simple. Indeed they are simpletons. Look at the work they do—the time they put in—all for what? What do they get out of it?'

One of his objects to-night was to get our paper to suggest a possible defeat of the Labour Government by the Liberal vote if they did not get a move on about unemployment. 'If you talk about a possible defeat of the Government you might waken up Ramsay MacDonald. Don't attack him. Try to lead him into taking

his great chance of doing something. I am very friendly with him at the moment. So please be nice to him. He is so feminine, and, if attacked, might do anything—and I don't want that. Also, another point. I want to scare the Tories (who really don't want Labour to be defeated just yet). If they think there is no real danger of a defeat all of them with sore throats on the Riviera or in the country will stay there and not come to the House to vote . . . and things will be safe.' (*Note:* As a matter of fact his 'bluff' came off and the Government got a majority of about fifty. It was on a censure motion on the Government's failure to attack adequately the unemployment menace.)

Lloyd George talked too of Beaverbrook and Rothermere. He liked the former as 'an attractive personality' but 'Rothermere is easier to deal with'. As I came back with Hodgson to Bouverie Street, he said:

'I have seldom heard Lloyd George in better form.'

CHAPTER X

Edgar Wallace on Lloyd George—Strong Meat from Birrell at Lady Lavery's Party—Liberal Defections—W. R. Hearst and Lloyd George—My 'tiff' with American Newspaper Magnate.

FRIDAY, April 17th 1931. Lunched with Edgar Wallace. He is giving up his Liberal candidature for Mid-Bucks. Says Liberalism is all right, but the party is finished, and until Lloyd George and all the Liberal M.P.s are scrapped and the party goes bankrupt and starts again, no good will come of it. . . .

Wednesday, May 21st 1931. A week ago the *Daily Express* launched a broadside against the League of Nations. We replied attacking this 'preposterous and irresponsible crusade', and quoted the King and the Prince in favour of the League as a security for world peace. I wrote Beaverbrook saying he was offering me an easy target and he replied that 'the League of Nations controversy should be interesting to both you and me. It will be continued'. I'm challenging him to print the letters of protest he is receiving. Up to to-night we have 50,000 signatures for our Declaration in favour of World Disarmament.

Wednesday, June 17th 1931. Was invited to a most interesting luncheon party at Lady Lavery's (wife of Sir John Lavery, R.A.) in Cromwell Place, Kensington. Others there were Birrell (a former Irish Chief Secretary) and Lavery—not looking his 75 years. Birrell is now 81. He was writing his *obiter dicta* the year I was born. A very sprightly luncheoneer—rather too sprightly I thought, with his free use of such words as 'bastard'. 'Why not?' he said (as some startled woman cried 'Oh')—'it's a good old English word and the correct one.' I don't like this speedy, *risqué* old age which thinks it is privileged to say any audacious thing it likes. Audacity is for youth. Lady Lavery whispered admiringly to me of Birrell. 'He is so pat.' Birrell is certainly a snappy 81. He dismissed the wine and called tersely for a whisky and soda. I recalled his political days and he said politics

disgusted him now that he was out of the battle, but he thought they were all right when he was in it. He had no use for the Harmsworths but had to admit that Northcliffe was a great figure. 'But so easily taken in,' he said, 'I was surprised he left so much money. He gave me £500 a year to write for him when I felt like it—once or twice a year. I never earned it. When he died these other people looked into it and stopped it. And quite right, too.' I asked him if ever there came a day when you wakened up and decided you had left youth behind. 'It never comes,' he said. . . .

Wednesday, July 1st 1931. More ill fortune for Liberals. Defection of Sir John Simon, Ernest Brown, and Sir Robert Hutchison. Despite our glossing, the effect on the party is serious. Poor Lloyd George! Why didn't he retire as the War Victory Prime Minister and join the elder statesmen in the Lords? Because, as he told a friend not long ago, 'that would have been treacherous to the Tories who had gone through the War with me and served under me in the Coalition. I should have been a coward to desert the Coalition when peace came and leave others to clear up the mess. I could not do that.'

Wednesday, July 3rd 1931. This slow death of the Liberal Party is a tragic thing to watch. Lloyd George, who looked like doing something energetic not long ago, and whom we still try to see at every 'week-end crisis' between the Liberals and Labour, sulks again among his pigs and potatoes at Churt, and oftener than not refuses to see us. Yesterday the story of his personal breach with Philip Snowden was gleefully hailed by the Tory Press. Lloyd George told me the other day that 'I don't mind *you* coming down to Churt at any time' to discuss matters of serious policy; but that he will not discuss them with our Political Correspondent. I replied that if our Political Correspondent was not able to discuss these things with the Leader of the Party it was unfortunate, as he had our complete confidence. But Lloyd George is autocratic. Maybe he's right. ('I was Prime Minister once.') As for me I prefer not to tie my hands. We still believe we are independent. . . . It is the Land Tax business which is

causing a succession of 'crises' with the Labour Government. Lloyd George protested that he would not give way. Fumed and stormed. But the 'agreement' he reached is described by a Liberal friend of mine thus: 'The Government gave up half its revenue and the Liberals half their principles.' One reason why Simon went, says another.

I have several long diary entries about this time, July 1931, of my meetings in London with W. R. Hearst, the American newspaper owner for whom Lloyd George was now writing articles on world affairs. George Doran (reputed to get £10,000 a year and £2,000 a year expenses), Hearst's ambassadorial representative in London, arranged for me to meet Hearst in his suite at the Savoy one afternoon. Doran told me he had tried to convince Hearst, who was always on the look-out for world writers, that in his opinion Lloyd George's star had waned, but that Hearst still believed he was the only real figure in our British public life. He certainly provided Lloyd George with a vast audience, for he controlled 28 newspapers, 13 magazines and several radio stations. Twelve million copies of his newspapers were reported to be sold in America every week. On this occasion of which I write Hearst had come to Europe to denounce with fiery fanaticism the Hoover scheme for the suspension of all War debts for one year. My record of my first talk with Hearst reads:

July 1931. I have met few men so outwardly mild as Hearst. I could hardly believe that this was perhaps the greatest power in American newspaper life, and one who, as the spiritual genius of the Middle West, enjoyed violently trouncing us decadent and money-cadging Europeans. His voice was highpitched like a woman's. He spoke quietly and with ultra-polite inflexion. He has a big ox-like head with eyes very close together—the only physical suggestion about him that he might be capable of crude fanaticism. I could not imagine this tall farmer-like figure with that long straight mouth as the man who was always kicking the hated Europeans in the pants.

Here was surely no man of strong feeling or even of speedy action. I soon found I was wrong. I asked him a question about a certain business matter. 'We will soon find out,' he said quietly. He took up the telephone—'Put me through to my New York office'—and before I left him he had spoken over the 3,000 miles of ether and got me my answer as if he had been ringing through only to the next room. I discovered I was wrong, too, to suppose that his anti-Europeanism was perhaps a pose—a stunt. Yet he made all his criticisms with a charming and disarming smile. He made no bones about his opposition to the Hoover Plan. Why should American help Europe? he said, in silky tones, almost as tenderly as a woman granting you a favour. He made it clear that he felt Europe should stew in her own juice, although he agreed that England's path had been more honest than that of any other creditor nation. I said I could understand the granite quality of his opinions, but what would happen if Germany went bust? 'Let 'em,' he said. 'Is that no concern of yours?' I asked. 'Why should we worry?' he said. 'Well,' I went on, 'you have a lot of money there that the Hoover Plan will save for you; you will probably lose it otherwise.' 'I do not believe it,' he said. I offered to print his views on this subject, however violent they might be. He hummed and hawed and later in the evening sent me a long and rather excited statement with the message, 'You must print it all or nothing.' I rang up to say that if I printed it all I should reply and hit him hard. He indicated that he didn't mind that. Yet he did mind when our criticism of his statements was printed. His own article in the *News Chronicle* he cabled to all his papers in America, so I dropped him a note suggesting it would be a fair thing to cable and publish in his papers our reply to him. I said he had complained of inability to get his views printed here. We had now printed them, and I was sure he would not like us to be able to complain that he would not publish ours. He replied by sending me another statement. Something apparently had happened in the meantime and there was some modification of his views regarding Hoover. He now declared that if

the Hoover scheme were only a moratorium and not a cancellation of debts, he would not oppose it. With these statements came another peremptory message for me of the 'Use all or nothing' order. I rang up, to find that he had started for Italy. I told his representative that I would print the fresh part of the statement, but didn't feel I ought to print all the preliminary padding which was merely a repetition of what he had said in his previous article. I didn't scissor his article out of any unfriendliness to him personally. Indeed, I thought I was doing him a kindness by not exposing him to further attack in this country on account of what we felt were his somewhat jejune arguments. His secretary seemed horrified when I told him I was going to cut some of the great man's writing, and said that Mr. Hearst always insisted that when he wrote anything it had to be printed without an alteration of a comma. I said that might go for his papers in America, but it didn't go for papers in England and that Mr. Hearst, however powerful he might be across the Atlantic could not dictate to editors in this country. Hearst later sent me a message of disappointment that I had not printed every word and a request that I would reprint his article again in full as an advertisement for which of course he would pay. I didn't think I could stultify the editorial tradition by accepting that. There had been no suppression of his views—they had been fully stated, and I could not accept his money for re-stating them. He was furious with me. Doran told me he sent a message: 'Clarke may be a friend of yours, but he is no friend of mine.' I am sorry. I thought I might have been a newspaper friend of Hearst's anyhow, despite my profound disagreement with his intransigent views. 'He does not have friends,' said Doran to me. Well, he is not the chap I would like to be half a crown in debt to. The truth is, I think, he realizes that he has played the goat about this Hoover business.

There is another diary entry of a midnight party at the Savoy to meet Hearst. This was before his 'break' with me. This is what I wrote about it in my diary:

A brilliant throng of film stars and London's social lights drank the American newspaper millionaire's champagne and nibbled at his caviare, melon, and chicken. Hearst for the most time stood apart, a sardonic figure in a corner of the room, as if putting into effect his principles of splendid isolation from the contemptible Europeans, for whose night of feast and merriment he was paying. It seemed strange to find him there at all—the embodiment of contempt of us and our works—standing there in that shrine of our social life, surrounded by a laughing company of English folk. Here were H. G. Wells and Lilian Braithwaite; the aristocratic Carisbrookes and the great showman Cochran. There were Hore-Belisha and Rebecca West and Marion Davies, and the Baroness Ravensdale and Edgar Wallace, complete with cigarette in 8-inch holder. Lords and honourables got in each other's way. Glamorous blondes floated about on the arms of England's immaculate young bloods. There was Beverley Nichols looking particularly radiant. Young Beverley has lately been writing that we English are too unselfish and too tolerant. Doesn't all this prove it? Letting a man throw bricks at us, yet laughing at him while he pays for our fun. Perhaps I have tumbled across one of the secrets of English unpopularity, not only with Hearst, but with other foreigners. We are really incapable nationally of hate. We enjoy being criticized—it flatters our vanity. Hearst I feel fails to see that. I looked at him hard. I could not help feeling that he might be saying to himself, 'Damn these people—why can't they be annoyed with me?' If an Englishman in America gave vent to his views as Hearst does, I suppose nobody would go to his parties. Here we simply don't care what Mr. Hearst says. I sat on a settee with an English actress and spoke my thoughts to her. 'Don't you think,' I said, 'this is a great chance for Mr. Hearst to exterminate a lot of us he doesn't like—that is to judge from what he says in his newspapers?' She replied, 'I was thinking, watching him standing silently over there, how we must puzzle our American friends. Whatever criticism they make of us they cannot annoy us. It must be very exasperating. I think this is

a sweet party, don't you?' I snatched a moment's talk with Hearst. When I said rather impishly that I thought what he had written in our paper would really help the Hoover Plan, he stiffened and looked as if he would like to knock me down. I told him I thought he had rushed in too early and too violently with his opposition. I told him he ought to go and see Andrew Mellon, the United States Treasurer, and he would probably assist him to change his views to a more reasonable complexion. He said he was going to see Mellon, and I understand he did so, and the result I think was that little recantation which appeared in his second article. Mellon, I understand, told him that if there were not going to be an American moratorium there would be a German one, and if Germany crashed what would happen to America's 400 million pounds of post-War investments?

CHAPTER XI

Political Convulsion—Lloyd George and the 1931 'National Government'—Newspaper Circulation War While the World Rocks—Talks at Russian Embassy and with 'Jimmy' Thomas.

EVENTS swept on to the convulsion of August 1931 when the Socialist Government, faced with the collapse of the existing order of things, called all parties to its aid and formed the 'National Government' with Ramsay MacDonald at the head as symbol of national unity, solvency, and confidence. Lloyd George was an invalid during those long to be remembered days. He was recovering from an operation. I, too, was out of harness because of the long and fatal illness of my nine-year-old son, Brian. I wrote to Lloyd George from my home on August 25th 1931, the day after the formation of the 'National Government', regretting that both he and I were 'out of things'. He wrote on the 29th a very touching letter of sympathy with me in my own domestic anxieties and telling me also that the doctors said he was making a splendid recovery, although he would have to go slow for some time, and that meant he would have to keep clear of politics 'as in the state things are at present it means either to be all or none as far as one's energies are concerned'. Lloyd George could, of course, have been a member of the National Government, but he had no stomach for it, and while Samuel and Simon and Runciman joined up, he remained aloof—the independent Liberal.

It was October before I returned to work in Bouverie Street. By that time the General Election had taken place and the country had endorsed MacDonald's actions and policy. The erstwhile Socialist leader put his helm hard over and completely changed the direction of the ship of state. Before very long the Liberals who had joined his crew were suffering political seasickness and Lloyd George was entitled to flatter himself for his wisdom in standing out. It was on the fundamental question of tariffs the trouble came and there were others besides the Liberals who fell sick. There was discomfort among the handful of Socialists

who had stuck to MacDonald. The boat was rocking too much for them. Very soon Lord Snowden packed up his kit and quitted the 'National' ship, lending his support to the Liberals who were opposing the introduction of tariffs. MacDonald was, however, able to persuade the suffering Liberals to stay under an arrangement called 'an agreement to differ'. While supporting the Government in general, the Liberals were at liberty individually to oppose tariffs. Well, that made *us* sick. My diaries contain many entries about this situation—so ludicrous from the Liberal point of view, of the vacillations of Samuel, the chief Liberal spokesman in the Government, and of the attempts to get him to clear out too. These had no effect until the Ottawa Agreements were concluded, when Free Trade received a knockout blow and the whole economic outlook of the British Empire was changed. I mention these things to illuminate points in certain diary entries that follow.

Wednesday, November 25th 1931. Talked with Ramsay MacDonald at a dinner at the Mayfair Hotel to Bennett, Canadian Premier. MacDonald, who looked none too well, seemed an out-of-place figure in that hard-boiled assembly of boiled shirts—like a Daniel in the lion's den. I wonder how long it will be before they eat him up! I told him I had recently been to his beloved Lossiemouth and wondered what inspiration he found in that bleak, grey spot. 'Ah—there is great inspiration in the grey, Mr. Clarke,' he said. 'But then,' I said, 'of course I am not a Scot.' He was a bit melodramatic (for a Prime Minister) on the subject of India. He talked of standing firm by his ideas and ideals about India's future destiny, and of 'leaving others to carry on the job' if he were not supported. Beaverbrook was a silent figure at the dinner. He did not look too happy. Maybe he feels that the Government he has helped to put in is too powerful and has run beyond him.

Monday, November 30th 1931. One of the palace entourage whom I met at lunch to-day told me, apropos of a talk about the Prince of Wales and marriage, that if some one like J. H. Thomas (whom the Prince now took

a new liking to after his stand for the National Government) could tell the Prince what the public felt (i.e. that he should settle down and be an ordinary family man in keeping with British domestic tradition) he would listen. But it would be difficult to make him listen to most other folk on the subject and certainly to no one but a Cabinet Minister. There was no obstacle at all to the Prince's marriage and if he got going the other princes would follow suit. He said the Prince ate no lunch and very little breakfast, but he did eat and enjoy a good big dinner.

Wednesday, December 9th 1931. Beaverbrook, with whom I had tea at Stornoway House, said there was a great chance of a real opposition by Liberals, and that I ought to go that very night and persuade Herbert Samuel to resign from the National Government and start a great Free Trade campaign. I suspect Beaverbrook is not so much concerned with the great Free Trade movement as with getting Samuel out of the way, for I hear that he is holding up things in the National Government. Beaverbrook has written a letter to my American journalist friend Roy Howard, in which he says that the League of Nations is done; that the League of Nations Union in London is also done; and that the *News Chronicle* will also be done in power and influence with the electorate if it does not look out. He tells Howard that our paper had three policies at the last election. The first on the front page over the signature of Sir Walter Layton—a frankly MacDonald policy. The second appeared in the news—'Up with Labour', and the third was to be found in the leader column. Beaverbrook described all this as weak-kneed and wobbling Liberalism. He sent me a copy of this letter.

Monday, January 4th 1932. Lunched at Soviet Embassy with the Ambassador and Madame Sokolnikoff. Sokolnikoff a quiet, attractive fellow, and his wife—a real Mongol stunner with most bewitching ways—the sort of woman one reads about in the stuff from Russia who could die for a man or order his head off without turning a hair. The girl who ushered Smith, our foreign editor, and myself into the Kensington mansion smoked a

cigarette as she unceremoniously invited us to dispose of our coats and hats and take a seat. There were two others at the lunch—one Niemann, a good-looking and clever Jew who is going back to the Moscow Foreign Office, and another man who is succeeding him in London. Conversation was cautious at first, but vodka made us—or certainly made me—bolder. I talked with Madame Sokolnikoff over the coffee. She showed me a Russian paper. 'There are no independent competitive papers, are there?' 'No,' she said with a glance that had a little pity in it, I thought, for my capitalistic slant. 'Are there any women's advertisements?' She tried to find me some but could not, and when I asked were women compelled to buy at Government shops, she said yes, but there were different ones for choice. Sokolnikoff joined in politely to let me understand that things looked different to Russians who had rejected the theory of enterprise for private profit. I said, 'This is a lovely house. What would happen to it in Russia?' I gathered it would be planned out and rooms allocated. 'If I went to Russia and had a friend there would he be able to put me up?' 'It would be difficult.' Madame Sokolnikoff showed me advertisements in the paper—small advertisements, advertising 'rooms wanted'. 'But surely,' I said, 'that is privilege—to be able to advertise for, or to let, rooms. I thought the Government controlled them all.'

She looked smilingly stern at me again and said: 'Most of them begin "Change desired".' I said no more. I said England was 'resigned' to Bolshevism for Russia, and the Five Year Plan; that I had known Russia of the old days but doubted if I should like it any better to-day. They smiled politely and some one said: 'When the world was monarchist the foundation of a Republic—e.g. the United States—was as great a shock and a pain to the old-fashioned as the Soviet is to the capitalistic supporters.' When I said, 'If the Five Year Plan succeeds,' Sokolnikoff said, 'Why do you say IF . . .? It will go in stages. You have your Dawes Plan and your Young Plans and so on. Ours will be followed by a further and better development.' The kindness, politeness,

culture, and knowledge of these people would be a revelation to our stick-in-the-muds who see in the new Russians nothing but rogues and assassins. I asked, a little maliciously, where was the secret room where all those plots were hatched about which one read in the British anti-Soviet Press. 'Oh, we'll show it you. . . . Come and see the secret door about which one of your newspapermen writes.' We entered a big reception-room with doors all round and windows overlooking the park. Our escort closed the door behind us. 'Now your scared newspaper friend went back from this room and wrote that, when he had entered, the door by which he came had disappeared. Look for yourself.' It *had* disappeared. It was one of those doors which fall flush and flat with the wall, with a sunken latch (we have one or two in our office) not easily seen. And I realized how some of our imaginative anti-Russian journalists invented their grim stories of mystery rooms. We all smiled. . . . No wonder these people suspect our Press and our sincerity when we can invent such childish tripe to work up suspicion against them. . . . Some one raised the question of Russia's repudiation of her debts after the revolution and Sokolnikoff said that 'deciding not to pay debts seemed about to become the fashion'—a tilt at the feeling growing in this country that we shall soon be telling the United States that we can't pay her.

Wednesday, January 6th 1932. Had a long talk with Sir Walter Layton to-night—the first since his return from Basle as British Government representative on the International Conference of Economic Experts to devise a new plan to put this sad old world on the rails again. Spender has written me from Paris—apropos of the forthcoming conference of Ministers at Lausanne to receive the report of the Basle Committee—that the world is under a spell, and Britain should take the lead and break it. Layton is very much behind the scenes and is an embarrassment rather than a help to us because he knows the news but can't give it us. He seems to be at the beck and call of the Prime Minister (who is said to be quite woolly on these international economic questions). Layton is to see him

to-morrow night, no doubt to help him with his draft of the British Government memorandum. Layton talked to me of the various points of view of the Government, the City, and the Treasury on the question of cancelling all War Debts. Nobody will lend Germany any money until there is confidence in a settled policy there. By the Government Layton said he meant the four or five people who were dealing with the question (obviously the only five with any pretence of interest or knowledge)—MacDonald, Baldwin, Simon, Runciman, and Neville Chamberlain. By the City he meant men like Norman, Governor of the Bank, the Deputy-Governor, R. H. Brand, and the big men in the big five joint-stock banks. By the Treasury he meant the permanent officials like Sir Leith Ross. I said I wondered whose view mattered except those of the elected representatives of the people. At the moment the City and the Government are half inclined for a clean sweep; the Treasury is not, but is inclined to support the French view. . . .

I say to Layton our paper wants more spirit and attack and we ought to demand forthwith a plain statement from the Government. He pleads, 'Not to-night, please. I am to see the Prime Minister to-morrow.'

Thursday, January 7th 1932. Layton came back from the Prime Minister to-night looking worn out. All I could gather from him was that Mac was worried about his dates. He has this engagement and that engagement —one at a university, Edinburgh, which he has once put off and can't do again. Ye gods! There is but ONE date for him—the date when he is going to say something and get Britain to give a lead to the world.

January 12th 1932. Had a letter from John Galsworthy to-day about an article on 'Peace', for which he refused to accept payment. He says he wrote the article because it is very much a question of speak now or for ever hold your peace; 'and when we're all in smithereens I want to feel that at least "I told them so".'

January 16th 1932. Sitting by my fireside at Dulwich this afternoon I am wondering what modern 'journalism' is coming to. The terrific newspaper war for circulation

which Beaverbrook predicted to me a few weeks ago is in full swing. On such adventitious aids to circulation as canvassing and free gifts the *Daily Mail* is at the moment said to be spending £7,000 a week; the *Express* £5,000; the *Herald* £5,000, and we of the *News Chronicle* £2,500. The insurance war has started again too, and we are all in for many thousands a year extra expenditure. Sales *can* be bought, and those papers prepared to spend most get most readers. Beaverbrook told me that when the *Mail* added some 130,000 to their sale a month or two back, in a determined effort to prevent *Express* sales from catching them up, they were spending £15,000 a week. We in Bouverie Street have to join in this mad fight merely to *hold* our sale, and the fact that we are not spending anything like our rivals, even the *Herald*, is reflected in the results—we have come to fourth place in net sales. It's very disheartening. We can tear out our innards at good reporting, good news services, good literary features —all to no purpose in this race. Also we have to take our part in the craze for special writers—the *name* being more important than the matter. I have just got Sir Landon Ronald to join us as music editor. It's a good catch, but now we've got to 'Barnumize' him and spend tons of money on proclaiming our great enterprise. We are spending far more, like Barnum, on the outside of the show than on the show itself. Similarly I've booked the American Ely Culbertson, King of Contract Bridge, for a bridge feature. I spend more of my time, I think, on publicity schemes than on purely journalistic work. We've just finished a 'Beautiful Mother and Child Competition' and now I'm being pressed for a 'Me and My Dog' picture competition and other things of that sort. Last year I calculated that the *Mail* offered prizes—with associated papers—to the tune of about £125,000 (inclusive, of course, of their entrance fee crossword); the *Herald*, in addition to £1,500 a week in crossword and picture puzzle offered some £50,000; we were offering something like £50,000 in all. These enormous sums make the editorial expenditures on legitimate journalism look silly. How long can it go on?

Monday, January 18th 1932. Am feeling very cynical. On Friday H. G. Watkins, leader of the proposed expedition across the Antarctic came to lunch with me. He had asked me if our paper would be interested in the Press rights. I said I would make him a tentative offer of £1,000—as a basis for future discussion. He agreed to think it over and leave us with first option. . . . Something has gone wrong, for to-day the *Telegraph* and their allied papers print the story of the forthcoming expedition with the caption, 'World copyright reserved'. Watkins, a lithe, blue-eyed, sandy-haired young Englishman of 25 made a most favourable impression on those I asked to meet him at lunch. He emphasized that he was only taking 'educated' men on the expedition; that all previous expeditions had shown that brawn 'crocked' before brains. 'In short,' I said, 'that mind beats matter all the time.' He agreed. We also discussed the emergencies that might arise on a Polar trip—such as happened to Scott. Watkins said he saw no reason why, in the last resort, if the lives of others depended on it, an explorer should not eat his fellow man. He defended this with considerable vigour and said it was only common sense. If one of the party died and food was needed for the safety of the others and no other food was available—well, why not? 'It would be a great story to run you as the Cannibal Explorer,' I laughed. . . . In view of this talk on the ethics of eating, I feel very much like writing to-day to say that I did not expect he was going to carry out his theories so far as to 'eat me up' as he appears to have done.

Friday, January 22nd 1932. M. Sokolnikoff, Soviet Ambassador, came to my Friday luncheon at Bouverie Street. We got in a small supply of vodka in honour of the occasion, but the Ambassador didn't take any. Price, our City editor, fainted—through the heat of the room, not the vodka, though the joke went through the office that the shades of the past were protesting. Sokolnikoff predicted that Germany would follow Russia with certain modifications of detail and said it would be easy to 'put it over' there because the Germans were a highly organized people with all the necessary political machinery in

existence for putting any new political and economic system into force. He also spoke of the threatened Japanese encroachments on Russian territory and interests in the Far East. He smiled about the coming Disarmament Conference and said Russia wanted complete all-round disarmament. Anything else was playing with the subject.

Tuesday, January 26th 1932. Donald (Sir Robert) asked me to lunch to-day with J. H. Thomas (Secretary of State for Dominions). We had it in the Chinese room at the Metropole—with its memories of my meetings there with Lloyd George. Thomas came along fresh from the Cabinet meeting that had been discussing the Tariff Bill, the Dartmoor mutiny, and other things. His language was warm as usual, not in temper, of course, but just as a bit of forceful embroidery to his volubility. He struck me as having no doubt at all as to his own importance in the Cabinet and how MacDonald (the Prime Minister) leaned on him. 'I carry the baby' was his attitude. He knew 'what he was in for' when he took on Unemployment. The majority Tory Cabinet had to look to him in regard to Labour matters and generally let him have his way. I wondered, as I watched and listened, what were the ambitions in that agile mind. Did he ever think of the Prime Ministership? That would be a strange conceit, but I doubt if he has yet set a limit to his ambitions. I wondered what he had wanted to meet me for. Surely not just to tell me that our papers, especially the *Star*, seemed always to have a 'down' on him. I told him he was a public figure and must expect to be criticized and shot at. We talked of newspapers and their terrible costs, and the wasteful insurance and gift competitions. I thought he was going to suggest Government intervention. Thomas talked of our paper and the *Herald*, and the possibility of amalgamation, although he hinted that that was impossible—'because I know the clauses in your deeds prevent it'. Well, whether that's so or not, I said emphatically that I could imagine no such amalgamation; and in that I think Thomas got the statement from me he had been seeking. We talked of the position

of the Cabinet now that it has 'agreed to differ'. We on the *News Chronicle* think this is a farce, and I said so. Thomas, of course, appears to think that Samuel is right; but inwardly I imagine he despises this new departure from the doctrine of Cabinet solidarity. I changed an awkward subject by saying it was interesting to note that, just as we had to have a pacifist to start the war (Asquith) and another to run it (Lloyd George), so we had had to have a lifelong Free Trader (MacDonald) to start tariffs. 'That's just like England,' I said, 'and explains why foreigners don't understand us and why they call us humbugs and hypocrites.'

In January 1932 the Japanese aggression in Manchuria and at Shanghai brought a new cloud on the international horizon.

January 31st 1932. Wilson Harris (at Geneva for our paper for the Disarmament Conference) 'phoned that the fate of the conference depends on Britain in regard to China. He says Lord Cecil told him: 'Japan must be stopped.'

Monday, February 1st 1932. To-night went to the eve of Parliament reception—the National Government one at Londonderry House, Park Lane, where the Marchioness was 'At Home' from 4.30 to 7.30—'to meet the Prime Minister'. This afternoon reception is a new idea —like the National Government itself. It was a terrific crush. As I shook hands with the Prime Minister, I said, 'What are you going to do about China?' He gave me what Winston Churchill would describe as the 'sign of the Boneless Wonder', that is, he threw open his palm, cocked his head on one side and let a pair of despairing eyes drop to meet mine. 'Yes, yes,' said Ramsay a little piously and then looked beyond me to see who was the next in the queue. 'The Japs are shelling Nanking,' I blew into his ear. 'What, to-day?' he said, and looked incredulous. '*Now*,' I replied, 'the cable is just in. *Now* —at this moment'—and then swept on. Poor Ramsay! A prisoner in a Tory throng! They have got him where they want him. . . . I went back to office and got a leader written on 'Where are the World's Statesmen?'

CHAPTER XII

Liberalism in the Doldrums—Staging a Lloyd George 'Come-Back'—Cowdray and the Divided Party.

Amid all the growing political excitement at home and abroad Lloyd George had remained for weeks down on his farm at Churt. I have a note dated February 13th 1932 regarding rumours that Lloyd George was 'physically done' and 'would not last three months'.

> 'Well,' runs the diary entry, 'that would be a pity, but if he came back it would be, I think, to more humiliations politically. The Tariff Bill has now been brought forward and Chamberlain seems to have gone nearly the whole Protection hog, and the Tories are boasting that this week sees the end of Free Trade. There is a mobilizing in the land of Free-Trade opinion; but the Liberals, divided into three camps, have no outstanding leader. Samuel's vigorous attacks on tariffs lose their point so long as he stays in the National Government. A new young crusader is required to arise and rally and lead the Liberals.'

I took the opportunity of having several talks with A. J. Cummings, now our political editor, on the subject of the rumours about Lloyd George's health. We agreed it was necessary in Lloyd George's, as well as the general interest, to know the facts, so Cummings went down to Churt, not so much as a newspaper man as a friend with some political experience who might be able to offer, as well as to receive, news and advice. The rumours about Lloyd George's health proved to be rubbish.

> *Monday, February 22nd 1932.* Cummings spent three hours with Lloyd George on Saturday at Churt and has sent me a most interesting memorandum of their conversation. He says Lloyd George looks extraordinarily well, 'and is probably better in health than ever; but for the first time, I think, I detected signs of an elderly man's

liking for comfort.' Lloyd George has, it appears, been discussing his future course of political action with three or four other people; and some of them have told him that he ought not to intervene in politics for the present, except at rare intervals on some important occasions. He ought to wait, they had advised, until the situation dramatically or decisively changes—to play, in fact, temporarily or indefinitely, a kind of elder statesman role and so to slough off the old Lloyd George skin and acquire a new reputation!

Cummings says: 'This seemed to me a senseless proposal—such advice as one might expect Tories to give him with their tongues in their cheeks, and I told him so. I also told him that it was necessary for him, in his own as well as the general interest, to resume without delay his normal duties as a Member of Parliament; that, while on the one hand his prolonged absence was giving rise to widespread rumour that he was a sick man who would never be well again and was finished, physically and politically, on the other hand it was being said that if he was fit as was claimed for him he had no right to remain indefinitely out of action when great issues were being decided, and that his continued absence was giving colour to the view that he was sulking in his tent. I told him further that unless he came back as a fighting politician he might as well not come back at all. In the eyes of the world he was a fighter; and a soft-pedalling Lloyd would cut no ice and might in truth be "finished".

'Lloyd George fully appreciated this. He intends to return to the House at an early opportunity and would probably have done so already had he thought he could have done anything useful on the Tariff Bill. He will probably speak in London soon, on a set occasion, covering the whole political ground in a fighting speech which will not mince words and will accuse weak-kneed Liberal leaders of having destroyed by their folly the credit of the Liberal Party.'

Cummings said to Lloyd George: 'You realize that the criticism of your enemies will be that you are speaking as an embittered politician?'

Lloyd George: 'I know that, and I *am* bitter at the deep humiliation of our Party. A writer calling himself "Sentinel" in the *Morning Post* to-day sums it up when he says contemptuously that the Tories need not bother about "these dissenting Free Trade Ministers. They are of no consequence. They are like the fleas one finds in a Continental bedroom which can be tolerated for a night." No party can hope to survive such humiliation. And to think that this was the party which through the period of the last Labour Government, and in the National Government before the General Election, really counted in the Councils of the nation.'

Lloyd George added that if he spoke in public as he contemplated, he would have to speak plainly without regard for anybody's personal feelings. In the present circumstances there was no possibility of coherent decisive action or of mobilizing Liberal forces. Nothing, in his view, could happen, because Samuel and Co. had stultified action.

Cummings got the impression that Lloyd George was not thinking in terms of leadership at all.

'He is really thinking less of Lloyd George than of the future of Liberalism and of the country. He said he was seeking advice because he did not want to do anything that would be harmful. He is pessimistic about the future of Liberalism in England, but says Welsh Radicalism is strong, as 3 to 1, and will survive and possibly show the way to revival. He agrees with what you said the other day that this is a great opportunity for a small Liberal group of young men, ably led, to challenge the whole Tory case in Parliament and create an opposition in the country, and prepare the way for a progressive return in the same way as he (Lloyd George) and a few other young congenial spirits played their part in the years before 1906. Unfortunately there is nobody who has emerged or seems likely to emerge with the necessary drive, force, personality, character. If such a group could be formed in the House he would gladly reinforce it with his own authority (as Bryce and one or two other older Parliamentary hands did in his young days), and Parliamentary experience,

intervening now and then at the right moment to drive home an attack or give it weight and substance. He says the future must be with the young elements of the Party. Public and Liberals alike are weary of the tiresome long-drawn-out quarrels of the older men like himself, which had what he described as an unhealthy effect, and he would be glad to see it dissipated by new men and a new spirit. He does not want leadership in the old sense for himself, and won't take it. He will never again go in for the day-to-day drudgery imposed upon him when he was Chairman of the Party and had to dance perpetual attendance upon the House, speaking on countless subjects in which he was not at all interested, and bearing the burden of a thankless task on his own shoulders. He will not again undergo that discomfort. And in no circumstances will he go to Labour. He is (he says) quite willing, of course, to propagand with Labour for causes which both parties may stand for; but he is going to die a Radical. He would not have the leadership of the Labour Party if it were offered to him to-morrow. He told me that Radicalism is really in his blood and he is not happy pretending to be anything else. When he was at the head of the Coalition Government, Bonar Law went to him one day and begged him to change over definitely and become the leader of the Conservative Party as well as Prime Minister, and offered to stand down at once if he would consent. He refused without hesitation, saying: "I can't do it. Chamberlain was a Radical and would not do it, and I am more of a Radical than he was." Although I don't think he will ever go into the trenches again, it would be a foolish thing to assume that he is never again to be reckoned with as a great political force. There is a latent quality about him which, even in his old age, might take him to the top again. No other man in England has it. In passing he endorses without qualification our stand on the Far East question and is contemptuous of Simon, who he says has committed a succession of first-class blunders. He is very friendly to us, but it seems to me from one or two indirect observations that he feels instinctively that we have become a little

anti-pathetic to him and that the *Herald* will make much more of him than we shall in the coming months.'

Monday, February 29th 1932. Cummings and I had lunch to-day with Lloyd George's right-hand man Colonel Tweed. The talk was all about the possibility of a Lloyd George come-back to active politics. Tweed said Lloyd George was suffering from the indolence of convalescence and could not bring himself up to the scratch—being afraid, for one thing, that he might not get a good reception in the House of Commons. From Tweed's description of Lloyd George's daily pursuit of routine comfort down at Churt I formed a mental picture of our hero doing the same walk round the garden every day, at the same time, asking the same questions and making the same prod at the same pig. I gathered that his reading was less of serious books and more of cowboy stories. It seemed right that we should try to help stir up Lloyd George to a 'come-back'. But how? There is no Liberal organization that can do it with a banquet or something spectacular like that. Tweed mentioned the 1920 Club as a possible platform. One trouble is that Lloyd George is thought to intend throwing all the mud he can at people like Samuel and Simon, and he can't be headed off the idea. We must advise him not to go in for mud-slinging only, but to say something constructive—that, or better nothing at all.

The ground having been thus prepared I tackled Lloyd George myself. I told him I would give a personal luncheon to some of the new, young Liberal M.P.s, with a sprinkling of the older ones too, if he would come as chief guest. The occasion would be to welcome him back from his illness. He agreed. The affair was arranged for Friday, March 11th, in the Georgian Room at the Hotel Metropole. Although the Press were not invited to send representatives, news of the affair leaked out beforehand —no doubt through M.P.s asking each other if they had been invited—and some Tory newspapers made all the mystery they could of it.

Friday, March 11th 1932. At the luncheon to Lloyd George to-day I had to explain (because of certain

references in the Press) that I was a journalist, not a politician, and that I had asked Lloyd George as an old friend returning from a long illness to be my guest; and that I hoped I could indulge my personal regard and wish him luck in the political arena without endangering my political conscience (interruption from Kingsley Griffith, 'It is good to hear that editors have any conscience.') Obviously some folk thought that the lunch had been staged for an attack on Herbert Samuel and John Simon, and as a new Lloyd George bid for the leadership of the disintegrated Liberal Party. In his speech he said he had no designs on the leadership—he had had enough—and was not going to attack any one—but he was not going to retire. He was chirpy, vigorous, springy of step, and made a fine little speech—quite his old self in fact. But he was noting things very carefully—taking all the prospects in as he surveyed the rather mediocre group of young (and some old) Liberals. I asked him what he was thinking. 'I'm thinking it's God help the Liberal Party,' he said, 'there's nothing much here. One or two of the young men seem good—but that's all. What a poor lot!' He said most of them were bewildered and wondering and looked frightened of each other. They did not know what they should do or what they wanted. They saw nothing clearly. Most of them were Tories if they but knew it—with blurred outlook. They could not see that trimming in one's young days was no good. They could not see that they had to be fighters, even if they got hurt a bit, and fighting was the only thing for youth in politics—fighting hard with not so much fear of criticism. It struck me as a very fair comment on the luncheon party. They really were a poor crowd, and as Stuart Hodgson said, gave you the idea of people who had got accidentally shot into jobs which they knew they could not hold down. Lloyd George told them that the people they had to fear were the Tory *young* men. Layton, who could not come to the lunch had hinted rather tactfully that I might have to watch my p's and q's in such a gathering. He need not have worried, but in any case a little indiscretion is often

a good thing for newspapers as well as people. That's the drawback to our show. We haven't enough audacity.

In the meantime a great Lloyd George 'come-back' meeting had been arranged to take place on Wednesday, March 16th at St. Ermine's, Westminster. I find I dismiss it with a very brief diary entry as 'a brilliant effort, mockery with moderation—mockery of Samuel, Simon and Co., Lloyd George's former Liberal colleagues now in the "National" Government'.

March 10th 1932. Cummings, whom I have sent to Geneva in connexion with the discussion about Japan, writes me that he thinks Sir John Simon is pro-Japanese if anything, despite the fact that world opinion appears to be dead against Japan. I wonder if the League means business.

Thursday, March 17th 1932. Lloyd George's return to the limelight, and his gibes at Samuel and Co. have caused a new stirring in the Asquithian camp, and to-day Layton asked me to meet at luncheon Lord Cowdray and Harcourt Johnstone. The latter had obviously come to persuade us to be kinder to Samuel, who is getting short shrift from us for remaining in a Government of whose economic policy he disapproves. Harcourt Johnstone, polished, aloof, and with a suggestion of the pompousness of the Holy Roman Empire, appeared to consider the problems of the Liberal Party too abstruse for explanation to the mob. I said it was nonsense to pretend that the rank and file of Liberalism could not understand the alleged subtleties of high policy which kept Samuel in the Government. I said that the position regarding Samuel was simple as daylight—he was staying in a boat and rowing the wrong way. He ought to row with the others or get out. That was how rank and file Liberals saw it, and it was folly to invest such a simple thing with mystery. Lord Cowdray, himself a much simpler sort of chap than Harcourt Johnstone, listened with a smile in his eyes and at the end said he realized my difficulties as a journalist trying to make a success of a popular newspaper with the political handicap of a divided party.

CHAPTER XIII

Wells on Mussolini—The King Debunks the 'Movies'—Lady Oxford at the Derby and Ascot—Paralysis of Democracy—The American Debt—Beaverbrook Again—Lady Lavery Ticks off Lady Oxford—Randolph Churchill and Lady Diana Cooper—J. S. Elias Arrives.

LLOYD GEORGE'S attempted 'come-back'—if such it may be described—was not the success hoped for. In the next few months he remained out of the general picture and there are few references to him or to politics in my diary.

Saturday, April 23rd 1932. I have been to see Mussolini's play *Napoleon* at the New Theatre, anglicized by John Drinkwater—poor stuff—just a series of episodes. I asked H. G. Wells, as we had a whisky and soda together in the interval, what he thought of it. 'Balderdash,' he said. I said, 'Why do you think Mussolini wrote it?' He replied, 'Just vanity, that's all.' Wells added that Mussolini was the world's finest example of a successful folly, and the world made the mistake of taking success as evidence of wisdom and ability. . . .

I envied Wells his soft double collar and dinner jacket. How nice to be great enough to be above convention and dress as you like with comfort. Wells was looking younger and thinner. 'Yes,' he boasted, 'I've got three inches off my girth. South of France and Badminton, I suppose. Golf and tennis take up too much time.'

Friday, May 6th 1932. Lady Oxford has offered an article on Holyrood, for which I gather from Ebbutt, our Literary editor, she wanted 50 guineas. I told him I thought 25 guineas was enough. Next morning she telegraphed me that she was sending the article, adding: 'You will send me 40 guineas or you will send it back.' This is how she commands editors. So I told Ebbutt to use the article and pay up. To-night I met her at the Albert Hall where our paper had arranged 'A World Celebrity Concert' with the King and Queen and the Princess Royal (Princess Mary) present, in aid of the

Musician's Benevolent Fund. She said to me, 'Have you read my article?' I said, 'No,' and she asked: 'Was it too dull?' I replied that nothing she wrote could be dull. This World Celebrity Concert gave me my first experience of monarchy at close quarters, for with Sir Walter and Lady Layton, my wife and I had to receive the King and Queen and Princess Royal. The arrangements, with which we had nothing to do (we just did as we were told according to the programme with which the palace had supplied us) got somewhat askew. The King and Queen arrived before the Princess Royal, not after, as had been arranged; and Lord Shaftesbury, to whom control of the ceremonial had been left was caught off his guard. Instead of the regimental precision one had expected, everybody seemed to be looking at each other for their cue. The King, to whom I was presented, seemed to step back a pace in surprise, saying, 'Editor—oh—the editor.' I wonder if he had expected to see some one looking rather different from myself. I thought perhaps I had looked too young or perhaps too respectable for an editor. The Queen was very silent and reserved. The King was quite voluble. His false teeth seemed to require attention. The idea of a King with false teeth! How human after all—and those ivories worried him as they do any ordinary human being. I thought once or twice they were going to drop out. He chose to discuss with us what he called 'the talking pictures'. He said he considered them an abomination. He told us he had never seen any and didn't intend to. He practically did all the talking in the little reception room, and we had no need to fear breaking the rule of speaking to him only when we were spoken to. It must be awkward for a King, of course, to know what to talk about to strangers like us. I wondered as I listened if one of his entourage had told him he was going to meet some radical journalists, a breed of social reformers who were anti-most-things-people-want, and had said that if he talked down Drink and Sabbath breaking, Night Clubs and Wicked Picture Theatres, all would probably be well. In the interval our directors and their wives were presented, though I could not help overhearing the King's

remark, 'Why the wives?' Frankly I am afraid my first experience of royalty at close quarters was a little disappointing.

Lady Oxford sat in a box next to the royal one. Some malicious joker said he saw her lean over and borrow the Queen's opera glasses, but I don't believe that.

Lady Oxford wanted me to take her to the Derby of 1932. She had rung up and said, 'I want you to get me a ticket for the Press Box at the Derby, and I want you to take me with you.' When I told her I was not going, she said, 'But you must. Think what fun it will be . . . I don't want to go with the aristocrats and in Lord Rosebery's box, or anything like that. I want to go with you.'

'Are you going to write something for us? That would be fine—Lady Oxford on the Derby.'

'No,' she said. 'I know nothing about racing or the Derby.'

'If you are going to write something,' I said. 'I might see if I could manage to cancel my other plans and come along with you.'

'Oh, do,' she said, 'I wish to goodness you would. Think it over and let me know. I will go with you, or some one else from your staff if you cannot come. We would have a great day.'

I didn't go with Lady Oxford, but asked my colleague J. L. Hodson to arrange to see her afterwards and get her story. We announced her article the day before the Derby. After the race, however, Lady Oxford went home to bed; said she had seen nothing and would write nothing. I got in touch with her and told her that we should have no alternative but to announce in the next day's paper her sudden indisposition; we should have to explain to our readers why her reflections on the Derby did not appear. She came up to scratch and wrote a very fine and readable article. The attached correspondence from her fills in one or two details:

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1,
May 31st 1932

Dear Mr. Clarke,

I'm sorry if I put you out but I thought 'Reflections on the Derby from the Press Gallery' might have been amusing for us both.

Yours,
Margot Oxford

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1,
June 3rd 1932

Dear Mr. Clarke,

It was most strange that I never got your message to write for the Derby; and on Wednesday morning a paper rang me up—which I thought was yours—asking me to write 600 words to be delivered at eight—but as I could not be back early enough to write properly, I refused. No servant wakens me the hour before dressing for dinner so I was in despair when I heard what had happened!

Luckily you sent a very nice young man to the Earles' house and before the men came out of the dining-room I wrote the article. I only read *The Times* if I'm in a hurry in the morning so never saw your paper or I could easily have written a far better thing for you. I'm sorry if I disappointed you.

Sir Albert and Lady Levy did not go to the Derby after saying they would take me, so I went to the Common stand and enjoyed myself very much—I always like talking to common people and I took my lunch and lunched in a field.

Yours haste,
Margot Oxford

Friday, June 3rd 1932. Walked down the Strand to-day with Beverley Baxter, editor of the *Daily Express*. He told me he had thought of writing a leader on the King's Birthday Honours, pointing out that in spite of all that Fleet Street had done to put the National Government in and save the country, not even a knighthood had come that way. I said I felt it a good thing for editors to keep

clear of politicians. He agreed, and added no editor should take an honour until he had retired.

Saturday, June 11th 1932. The Lausanne Conference to settle the future of Reparations and other matters is to open next week. Last week I sent Cummings to Lossiemouth to see the Prime Minister. They had a long talk, but MacDonald asked Cummings to publish nothing, I do not wonder. Cummings says he came away more depressed than he has ever been 'with the statesmanship of the time'. He describes MacDonald as sinking his head in his hands, fumbling for ideas and words, and almost whining about his difficulties. 'I got,' says Cummings, 'an impression of weakness in mind and spirit and the lack of co-ordination at the head of affairs.' MacDonald seems out of touch with some of his ministerial team—Simon, for example, and accuses them of talking off their own bat without consulting him. The disappearance of Brüning from the German Chancellorship MacDonald thinks is a disaster which has thrown everything into the melting-pot. As Layton says to me, 'It looks as though there were a *Spielmann* in this world crisis, always upsetting things. We were all set for what looked like a final commonsense agreement about Reparations and War Debts, when off goes France for an election, and Germany throws out her Chancellor.' It makes one wonder—here is the world at what we feel is one of the greatest crises in history; and, when prompt decisive action is needed, the democracies are paralysed by one election after another. Is there too much talk among democracies to get on with the business of the world? I talked with J. A. Spender on this. He agrees that a change may be coming, but cannot foresee what the new order is to be. We cannot go back to the feudal idea. Populations are too big and the industrialization of the world is against it. I rather suspect he senses danger of the possibility of the passing of 'political government' as we know it to-day. As for the immediate Lausanne problem, everybody except America seems to be in the mood for a clean slate about War Debts. MacDonald's view, I understand, is that we certainly cannot go on paying America. Public opinion

here would not stand it, and we cannot impose more taxes. MacDonald appears to be regretting that he hasn't some 150 more Liberal and Labour Members in the House to reduce the Tory power, so as to have something at his back with which to confront the formidable ranks of the Tories. . . . Megan Lloyd George had lunch with me on Friday. I mentioned how the German, French, and American elections had been a curse and looked like busting the conference on Reparations, and I asked if she thought it might be a good thing to shut up all world Parliaments for a year and, on these immediate pressing economic and financial matters, each country have a representative with dictatorial powers—a sort of world committee to put the world right. She raised her eyebrows. I said, 'Remember your father was the biggest dictator the world ever had. The War made him that. It is a pity this long drawn-out crisis doesn't flare up into something really startling which would make democracy accept some leadership.' We talked of women M.P.s and the complaint that they are so often silent on questions affecting women, children, and the home. Megan said to me rather hotly, 'I was elected as a Member of Parliament, not as a woman. My constituents had not only women's things in view—not mainly women's matters.' She refused to be biological.

Thursday, June 16th 1932. Edgar Fifoot of Lloyds Paper business took me and the wife to Ascot for the Gold Cup to-day. Yesterday afternoon a lady's voice came through on the telephone: 'This is a person known as Margot Oxford speaking, and I want Mr. Clarke.'

'Here he is,' I said.

'Oh, splendid,' she went on. 'I want to tell you why I didn't go to Ascot. Women go to Ascot to look pretty. Men to make money. As I can do neither, I stayed away. I have written about it. Would you like the article?'

Of course I jumped at it. Incidentally in her article she flayed the modern girl for her plucked eyebrows fashion. Fifoot, to whom I told the story, said I ought to have brought Lady Oxford along with me to-day. When I spoke to her yesterday I asked if we were now friends

after the Derby misunderstanding. I said I was amused at her preference for the company of common people as she had said in her letter. Was that really so?

'Oh, Mr. Clarke,' she said, 'I do, I do. We should have had an amusing time if we had gone to the Derby together.'

Sunday, June 19th 1932. Beaverbrook asked me to-day if I minded an attack on the League of Nations Union he proposed starting in to-morrow's *Daily Express*. I said it was a matter of indifference to me. I had no particular love for the League of Nations Union which snubbed my paper by sending its 'important communications' to *The Times* exclusively—a quite undemocratic policy and a negation of the high-falutin' principles for which they claimed to stand. 'But,' I said, 'I suppose your attack will include the Prince of Wales, one of its vice-presidents?' Beaverbrook roared, 'Of course I will attack him too. That young fellow wants some common sense put into him —making all these Free Trade speeches. . . .' 'Yes,' I said, 'they might be written in our office.' Beaverbrook talked with disdain about the coming British Exhibition in Denmark and the plan for the Prince to be joint patron.

'If you drag the Prince into politics,' I said jestingly, 'you'll be losing your peerage.'

'And who the devil would care about that?' snapped Beaverbrook.

This talk took place at Cherkley, where Beaverbrook had asked me and my wife to dinner. During the evening he deserted the chattering guests and went to amuse himself in a corner of the room with a mammoth wireless set. He caused it to shriek in all the languages he could find.

'What's that language?' he suddenly demanded of Lord Castlerosse. It sounded like Danish, so Castlerosse said it was, and Beaverbrook ran to the set and shut it off with some such remark as 'this damned Denmark'.

One of his pet themes at the moment is our adverse trade balance *vis-à-vis* Denmark with its huge exports to us of bacon, butter, and eggs. He pointed me out to the company as a real Empire Free Trader at heart, and I

felt it necessary to say that no one in that company had a keener interest in the Empire and its social, political, and economic unity—'but not to the exclusion of the world trade which was the foundation of our fortunes.'

'Bah,' said Beaverbrook.

Wednesday, June 22nd 1932. Met Sir Oswald Mosley at Lady Lavery's to-day. I think he foresees a Fascist England with himself as leader. He was more subdued than I expected to find him. Neither he nor his wife appear to have much use now for the Labour folk. Lady Cynthia said to me that they were such snobs—and so hopelessly unintelligent. 'Of course they liked our title,' she said. . . . She spoke with great irony of their former idol Ramsay MacDonald.

'Why does he hang on as a prisoner of the Tories?' I asked.

'Oh, he is a real snob and likes the soft luxuries of life. Such things as Chequers and Londonderry House—the comfort and repose and remoteness from the sordid things. He likes the *air* of culture and wealth and good things.'

Lady Lavery spoke of Margot Oxford. 'I don't want to see her for a day or two. She was rude to me at lunch yesterday. I knew her when I was a girl and she was very kind to me, and I have always had a feeling of awe in her presence. She makes me feel a schoolgirl again. She had a party and we were all talking when she suddenly called out, "Let's have general conversation. . . . Shut up Hazel." (That's me.) General conversation means "Margot" doing all the talking and its always about old folks of the past that we of this generation don't know about. This time it was about some fellow called Walter Crane, and as she was getting quite lyrical—and boring—about him I took courage and knocked on the table and said, "Let's have general conversation." I was quite frightened after I had spoken and she said, "This *is* general conversation," and I said, "Well, I don't think so, I've never heard of the man." But she chattered on. I can't stand too much of her so I didn't have her to lunch to-day. . . .'

To-night at the office talked again with Layton about the world crisis and the coming Lausanne and Geneva conferences on Reparations and Disarmament respectively. Layton is such a first-class chap, but how much more first class he would be for me as an inquisitive journalist, if he had not his 'expertness' to handicap him. I share Lloyd George's unenthusiasm for experts. I find in journalism that when they *do* know something they say you must not print it, as it would be premature, or might affect this or that thing. When they *don't* know they still ask you not to print what *you* know, because, as *they* don't know, it might not be true, and anyhow, if *they* don't know, it probably isn't worth knowing. That's the sort of brake an honest-to-goodness, fact-seeking journalist has to put up with among experts—and smile.

Tuesday, June 28th 1932. Layton has pushed off to Switzerland for the Lausanne and Geneva conferences. President Hoover has thrown another brick through the Geneva window by, in effect, asking them to come to brass tacks and agree to an all-round cut of one-third in armaments. Sir John Simon (our Foreign Minister) has made a reply which seems rather cool and the idea is that he is out to 'kill it by kindness'. Layton telephones that Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister, is keen to have a world agreement, and it is apparent he is not in full sympathy with Simon's over-cautious attitude. Simon, however, is in London and no doubt subject to the atmosphere of the Tory ministers; so MacDonald has sent Herbert Samuel poste-haste from Geneva to attend the Cabinet meeting in London and press his (MacDonald's) view. MacDonald was told during the week-end in Lausanne that in London there was too much of the Law (Simon) and too little of the Prophet (Samuel) and MacDonald acted on the hint. Seems funny, if this is the key moment, and if MacDonald really believes in world disarmament, that he should be going to see the St. Bernard Hospice dogs instead of flying back to London to assert his authority and spike Simon's guns. . . . At Lady Lavery's to-day met young Randolph Churchill (Winston's son). There's no doubt he is convinced he

is a remarkable young man. He's a good looker with the grand manner. Arrived late and blew up to his hostess like a sailing ship before the breeze, arms extended, then closing round her with a kiss and an apology 'for being so late, my darling'. I asked Randolph if he were still working for Hearst (the United States newspaper magnate for whom Lloyd George also writes). He said he was and would continue to do so as long as Hearst paid him so well. Politics was all 'mush' (his father's voice) and Hearst was a 'marvellous fellow', who went about England buying up old Abbeys and such-like antiques and leaving them lying about in packing-cases at his castle in Wales. Among others at the luncheon-party were Megan Lloyd George, M.P., Miss Cazalet, M.P., Lady Diana Cooper, Douglas Woodruffe, and Evelyn Waugh. Randolph at luncheon was a great talker—airing views seeming very near-Fascist to me, taking off his hat to 'Tom Mosley', flaying Baldwin and MacDonald, spitting on the Government with its spineless Toryism; demanding the suppression of the League of Nations and supporting armaments as the chief bulwark of civilization. And so on without end. It was a change to turn to Lady Diana, still the lovely woman of that day years ago when I gave her her first journalistic commission—to describe Princess Mary's wedding for the *Daily Mail*. She's playing the Madonna in *The Miracle* at the Lyceum. She showed me and Evelyn Waugh two or three inflamed punctures on her arm near the shoulder. They were mosquito bites which she had suffered during the play on a recent night. In the part of the Madonna she stands immobile for nearly two hours. She must not move a fraction of an inch: 'I was in awful agony with these things eating me, and I could do nothing,' she said. . . . Seems ungracious to say I didn't enjoy the luncheon-party very much. Can't make out why I'm asked, for most of these folk are not my sort, and I can't imagine Lady Lavery wants a gossip par in our paper about her parties.

There was some talk at the other end of the table of a female social climber who after much effort had 'arrived' in exclusive London circles. Now, people who had

previously avoided her parties with a sneer fought each other to get there, and at one the other night 79 people had asked for invitations and had been refused. . . . I heard Randolph saying he would not subscribe to charities he didn't fancy, and Lady Diana telling him prettily, 'Oh, yes, you would. If I asked you for money for a charity of mine you would give it—not because of the charity, but because of me.'

Wednesday, June 27th 1932. Dennis (my son) and I lunched at Savoy with J. S. Elias (*Note:* now Lord Southwood), boss of Odhams and the *Herald*—a little ginger-faced man with sharp eyes—a bundle of real hot-stuff. A very pleasant fellow. He asked Dennis why he was wasting his time at Oxford instead of getting down to it and earning his living before 20 as he ('and your father') did. He told us of his early life in an East-end jeweller's shop for a few bob a week and how it embittered him, and how he had gone to Odhams as a junior clerk and was now boss. He has no hobbies, has the *Herald* read over to him every night at 11 or 12 or 1; spends all day at the office; has no love of food (at the Savoy he told the waiter to please himself what he served). 'I do nothing but work,' he said. 'I am not boasting about it, but I have never been able to use time any other way. I play a bit of golf as a duty—my doctor. I don't enjoy it. I have no hobbies and that's going to be the difficulty when I retire, if ever I do.' Elias is a man Fleet Street will have to watch. This is the man who took up the *Herald* a couple of years ago when it was struggling along with a relatively insignificant sale, and almost in a single night miraculously transformed it into a great daily newspaper with a sale challenging the giants. . . . And yet what a ghost of a life he seems to be living.

Sunday, July 10th 1932. Returned from a week-end's fishing at Deal with C. R. MacKenzie (night news editor) to meet Layton on his return with the Prime Minister from Lausanne. The Reparations Conference there has reached agreement and has probably opened a door leading to restoration of the world's shattered fortunes. I wonder if it will ever be known what a big part Layton

played in this conference. He has, I gather, been the 'go-between' at Ramsay MacDonald's right hand. Layton has been writing special notes for our paper, I having got him 'on my reporting staff' at last. Now for America. What will she do? Cancel (or modify) our debt to her. We are going slow in our paper talking that sort of stuff. It would put America's back up.

CHAPTER XIV

Lloyd George on Democracy's Need of Leadership—Another Midlothian Campaign?—Sir Herbert Samuel's Ottawa Dilemma—More Lady Oxford Letters—Beaverbrook and Food Policy—Germany Demands Equal Status.

FRIDAY, July 29th 1932. Went with Dennis to lunch at Churt with Lloyd George. He kept us talking from 12.30 to 6.30. Bron-y-de is a most attractive house, fairly heavily furnished, with pig farms and chicken farms and orchards all about it. We went through Guildford and along the Hindhead road, turning off at the top of a hill and leaving the main road for the byways and backroads of lovely, wooded, colourful Surrey. As we were a little ahead of time we stopped at the bottom of the hill to ask our way—and take a glass of sherry—at 'The Pride of the Valley', a very English countryside sort of hostelry. Dennis liked the absence of petrol pumps about the village green, remote from the broad highway. It was rather like the England we dream about. In the pub, a Surrey Trust place which we called 'Lloyd George's pub', was the same Englishness—simple things and good and pleasant service. It was English also to the request 'not to sit on' the brass fender. We asked the waiting-lass where Lloyd George lived, as I had not been this way before, and I was not sure of the house. She pointed through the window. 'You see that road—well it's not that one, but the one in front of you. You go up there and you come to a gate and a path—well, it's not that one, but the next one.' Despite this we took the wrong turning and disturbed a Mrs. Riddell, Lloyd George's neighbour. Miss Stevenson, Lloyd George's secretary, who received us when we got the right bearings, said Mrs. Riddell jestingly said she had gone to live there to protect Lloyd George from all his admirers. We walked in the garden and Lloyd George came out to greet us, arms waving, short legs knocking at each other rapidly. He walked us up and down and talked of his pigs, his chickens, his raspberries, and the splendid remoteness from the turmoil of

politics. Yet I detected no sign of advancing years—except it may be in this growing affection for the delights of rural retirement. We had a most appetizing luncheon—'all produced here,' said Lloyd George. I drank cider and he drank buttermilk, of the virtues of which he sang high praise.

'Often at night,' he said, 'I have a potato with butter and a glass of buttermilk from my dairies—simple country fare, but enough, and good for you.'

After lunch he pulled out two pipes and asked what tobacco I smoked. 'I am going back to my pipes,' he said, 'but I have almost forgotten how to keep them alight. I used to be a great pipe smoker. Now I am seeking a suitable tobacco. Either I can't keep it alight or it is too hot.' Lloyd George also showed us an opium pipe which had been given him in Ceylon—'only a souvenir, you know.' I gave him a pipe of 'No Name' (in which name he was greatly interested and wanted to know its history, which we told him). He seemed to like it and I am sending a quarter-pound on to him at Criccieth whence he goes to-morrow to join Mrs. Lloyd George and Megan. All afternoon we sat and smoked and talked. He thoroughly condemned the Lausanne agreement; said Layton had got off the track; that nothing short of complete cancellation would do; that it was no agreement at all, but an agreement to make an agreement later on if people would agree. France had scored again: Germany still had to agree to pay something. There was nothing good or bold or effective in the whole business 'as the next four months will show'.

'I wish,' he went on, 'we could get some one to tell the country the real peril we are in—not a politician. . . . I do not know who could do it. . . . No, I am not the man. . . . No, the King could not—constitutional reasons forbid. The Prince might . . . Baldwin might, but I dunno. . . . He is too tired and indolent, no fire. . . . This country only needs a leader to tell it the truth to wake up and adopt a bold policy—to frighten the country. Northcliffe did it . . . he was a great man, your former chief, with great courage. When I was Prime Minister

and something of the same sort had to be done he boldly did it. I can never forget that. . . . But there is no Northcliffe in the Press now. . . . The Press could do it if they had a genius like Northcliffe. No, Beaverbrook is not the man . . . he has not the independence Northcliffe had; he has tied himself to this Empire Free Trade stuff and has handicapped himself by that; Rothermere might, but I doubt it. Your paper could perhaps do it if Layton would toe the line and be less academic and see things as they are—now—not when it is too late. You must think all this over. The time is not quite ripe yet. Things are not quite bad enough. In about four months' time it may be absolutely the only salvation for some one to come right out with a manifesto on the nation's peril. Don't be deluded that Lausanne has put things right. Things are going to happen.'

I asked if he thought Parliamentary democracy was going to fail—if we were going to have some sort of dictatorship. He replied that democracy was not going to fail although he did not rule out the possibility of some sort of dictatorship. He drew on Roman history to show that democracy had always in the past put dictators in to save itself, and I gathered he would not be surprised at something of that sort happening. 'It happened during the War,' he said, 'when the nation in peril did not object to the virtual dictatorship.' His views were very fluid on this subject and he looked at me queerly on several occasions when I asked if some sort of temporary 'dictatorship of democracy' would be advisable. He spoke contemptuously of Ramsay MacDonald (the Prime Minister) now, in his view, a hopeless Tory and a victim to the lure of social vanities. He harped back to the election. He said it ought never to have been held. Ramsay had been to seek his advice about it before it happened, but had obviously not taken it. He spoke bitterly too of Sir Herbert Samuel—'but only politically, mind you, there is nothing personal in my attitude towards him.' Lloyd George, it appears, had advised Samuel not to agree to an election. 'Judge of my astonishment next day when I read the announcement that Ramsay was going to the

country and that Samuel had agreed. That election was a fatal mistake.' Lloyd George also mentioned the Irish crisis and said he would support the British Government in their refusal to be jockeyed out of their rights by De Valera on the question of the annuities.

Before I left, Lloyd George mentioned the National Liberal Club decision to let in non-Liberals. 'What do you think of that?' he said. 'I think it is pretty bad,' he went on, 'and I shall not continue my membership. After all, I have got to watch my pounds nowadays, as we all have, and I don't feel I should continue paying to a club that has changed its policy like that.'

My general impression is that for the moment Lloyd George is enjoying his carefree life—with a wistful glance over his shoulder now and then at the pomp of leadership he once knew—and that he prefers to be an onlooker at the political game. I think he still has the physical and mental capacity for leadership. He told with great gusto the story of Gladstone, deserted by all his entourage over Home Rule, coming out when an old man to fire the land with his Midlothian Campaign. 'It was a more difficult thing to do in those days than now. Up to then figures in political life had only spoken at full-dress affairs in places like the Albert Hall, or the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. To speak in market-places or from the hustings was a vulgarity only indulged in—if at all—by the lesser fry. Gladstone risked all the ostracisms . . . and won. The story of that magnificent effort has never been told. Morley's book does not tell it with the stride and flame it needs. Some great writer will tell that story one day so that people will understand Gladstone and his triumph.' I wondered as he talked whether Lloyd George fancied himself as another Gladstone leading another 'Midlothian Campaign'. He did not convey that impression. He spoke just in terms of almost reverent affection for that great Liberal figure of the past.

After turning over that long talk with Lloyd George, I sent a member of the staff to Churt to ask him for an interview for publication explaining his farm experiences in

relation to the general problem of agriculture. My man came back empty-handed. Lloyd George sent me a note to explain that Beaverbrook had already asked for a similar story for his paper, but had been put off, and therefore he (Lloyd George) could not very well give an interview to our man. He added that the tobacco I had sent him 'was a tremendous success, far and away the best I have ever smoked'. I was not over pleased at Lloyd George's tenderness towards our rivals. However, if I could not get him into our paper, there was Lady Oxford. Always when there seemed a possibility of getting Lloyd George to come out of his corner, she bobbed up too.

August 12th 1932. Lady Oxford sends me the following letter:

MILTON LODGE,
NORTH BERWICK,
August 9th 1932

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I have written 2,000 words called 'Hints on the Art of Life', and the part character plays in it. If you would like to have it I will send it to you, otherwise I shall send it to the American Press. This is a time of year when newspapers have little of interest to write and my article may provoke controversy as I mention characters by name—I never care much for Mr. A—— or Mr. Z——.

Yours in sincerity,
MARGOT OXFORD

I rang her up to say that I would certainly take her article. She seemed very pleased. I felt by printing it we might stir Lloyd George to come more into our paper. I was never in doubt of his great news value to us.

August 18th 1932. Cummings writes to me from Ottawa, where he has gone as special correspondent to the Empire Economic Conference, that he proposes to go and see Roosevelt, and get a general view of the situation in the United States before returning to England. He has been

in touch with Roosevelt, who seems anxious to unbosom himself to an English journalist. As for Ottawa, Cummings says the official secretiveness, due to Bennett (the Canadian Premier) is amusing and foolish, and apart from the real leakages Cummings has never been at any job on which so much purely invented matter has gone out to the world at large. He adds that although as the result of Ottawa (unless because of Bennett it fades away into nothingness) our food will undoubtedly cost us more, the British are generally fighting for lower tariffs. The high tariffists like Hailsham, and Chamberlain, and particularly Baldwin are being educated rapidly by the facts and are actually being forced into the position of advocating free trade for British trade, much to the chagrin of the Dominion grabbers. . . . This Ottawa business looks like having some effect on the Liberal Free Traders still hanging on in the Government here. . . . To-day I was interested to be asked by Robert Bernays to meet Sir Herbert Samuel at lunch. Sorry I could not possibly go. He may misunderstand that. Samuel has been rather Alpinely aloof from us in Bouverie Street since he got the sweets of office and I cannot help a feeling that it's somewhat late in the day to want to meet me. He can have no illusions about our lukewarmness to him, but it may be that in view of the imminent Ottawa decisions he sees his position in the Government as uncomfortable, if, indeed, not impossible. Maybe, too, he has heard of my recent day with Lloyd George and would like to know what's afoot in that quarter. Or maybe he desires to put his side of the case—his defence of his action in remaining a prisoner of this Tory Government. I wish I could have met him and let him see that although we do not see eye to eye about that, we give him full marks for honesty of opinion. Samuel is off to Lossiemouth, to see MacDonald, I suppose, and I am having a leader note saying that it is to be hoped he is taking with him copies of MacDonald's and Runciman's speeches in which they have declared they would never stand for taxes on food.

Another letter from Lady Oxford:

MILTON LODGE,
NORTH BERWICK,
August 25th 1932

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I wonder if you would like me to write the sort of short paragraphs such as 'ATTICUS' writes in *Sunday Times*? I do not know how many words but I suppose about 1,200 on every sort of subject—literature, politics, people, etc.

I could not write every day—nor would this be wise, but I could write four times a week for you if you could give me £40 a week. Will you try me? You can always write and tell me you want no more articles at the end of this year. The story that I am writing a life of the King is quite untrue. In my new book I have got three chapters on King Edward, Queen Alexandra, and King George, and it is this that has given rise to the rumour.

Yours,
MARGOT OXFORD

That was an offer I would have liked to take, but in a matter like this I found it advisable to defer to the views of others in my political entourage who showed no enthusiasm for adding Lady Oxford to our list of regular contributors, so we missed what would, I feel, have been a sparkling addition to the informative and entertaining side of our newspaper. Of course we printed occasional articles from Lady Oxford and the following further letter from her shows a justifiable feminine pride:

MILTON LODGE,
NORTH BERWICK,
August 29th 1932

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I've had a letter from Sir Clive Wigram from Balmoral in answer to one of mine in which he says, 'The King has been reading with admiration your interesting articles in the *News Chronicle*. I would send you his letter but it is marked 'Private'.

Yours haste,
MARGOT OXFORD

September 6th 1932. Lloyd George rang me up this morning to ask if I knew what was going to happen to the Liberal members of the Government (Samuel etc.) in face of Ottawa developments. I said I wished I knew. He said I need have no doubt about Samuel. He was not going to resign. He would stick in office with the National Government on some pretext of necessity for him to do so because of international affairs. He said that Sinclair (Sir Archibald) and Runciman would stay on. I said that Ramsay MacDonald appeared confused about the whole matter, and he said, 'Yes, he has a box of Ottawa papers and I see he is only opening them to-day.' I was going on with the conversation when I realized that the telephone was 'dead'. That was an old Northcliffe trick—leaving the telephone when you have said all you want to say and leaving the man at the other end 'in the air'. . . . Layton saw the Prime Minister yesterday, but he can get nothing out of him concerning the Ottawa agreements. This is awkward for Layton, as he has been asked to be British delegate on the Preparatory Financial Committee for the World Economic Conference, and he has only agreed to serve if the Ottawa agreements do not cut across his convictions. MacDonald simply 'doesn't know'. All that Layton got out of him I gather was that 'I must get Runciman here. He is on holiday in Scotland. I must have him,' which goes to support the idea that Ramsay has very little grip himself on these financial and economic affairs.

Sunday, September 11th 1932. Cummings, fresh back from Ottawa, and I went to luncheon with Beaverbrook at Cherkley to-day. Beaverbrook, who says Cummings was by long odds the best man at Ottawa, had expressed a wish to hear what his reactions were to the conference. Beaverbrook fired eager questions at Cummings and said, 'Well, I suppose you feel it only needs another Ottawa conference to bust up the Empire.' Cummings said he did feel that way. 'After the first day,' he said, 'there was very little talk of Imperial unity, but just a series of quarrels, each trying to sell the other "gold bricks".' Cummings told us of the awful squabbles that

had taken place between Bennett, Runciman, and Neville Chamberlain, etc. Beaverbrook said that cutting all the trimmings off, Great Britain had got little out of the conference, and that what the Dominions had got was this—a guaranteed exemption for five years for any taxes Great Britain might put on food. That, he thought, was something, but Britain would find nothing in the supposed concessions for her manufactures. Beaverbrook now appears to be trying to frighten Britain into food taxes by saying that if war comes we shall have no food unless we grow our own, and that we can only do that by keeping the foreign food out. He says the League is going bust and we are going back to the armaments scramble, and I suppose, according to his philosophy, that won't be at all bad for trade and employment.

There were several other unusual people at the luncheon. One very cocksure little person who seemed to be enjoying himself was Aneurin Bevin the Socialist. He addressed Beaverbrook familiarly as 'Max'.

Beaverbrook told Cummings and me that we ought to be on the *Express*. As we were leaving he came and stood by the car and talked incidentally of the high salaries he paid his 'higher ups'. These oblique enticements may be all very flattering when one is getting nothing like the sums mentioned, but as we came away I said to Cummings I could not see either of us honestly subscribing to Beaverbrook's policy, especially as now it seems to be leading to a world armaments race. Beaverbrook, of course, doesn't think we ought to let that sort of thing upset us. He has often stressed to me that in cases like that of Cummings he would not expect him to write to order, and that anybody can see that he doesn't refuse to print opinions that are not his own. Well, I doubt if it would work out either for Cummings or for me, although I must say I am not enamoured of many of the people in the Liberal camp. We have too many cranks and killjoys. They do neither us nor Liberalism much good, but we can't 'rat' simply because of the poor quality of some of our disciples.

Saturday, September 17th 1932. To-day we took the bull

by the horns and had a leading article declaring that the Liberal ministers ought to get out of Government at once. Liberal opinion, we declared, should be absolutely free and unfettered in relation to both domestic and foreign affairs. It should, we argued, in these critical days, be free to stand aside from all those not sharing its enthusiasm for the League of Nations for disarmament, for world co-operation and the removal of trade barriers. It could preserve its independence and still remain a powerful opposition; and we felt that Liberal ministers could help both Britain and the world better out of the Government than in it. Long before I was out of bed this morning Lloyd George was on the telephone from Churt to my private house. 'Well, does that leader mean you know they are coming out? No? Will they? Well, I doubt whether Samuel is coming out. Ring me up at once if you hear anything.'

Monday, September 19th 1932. Germany won't go to the Disarmament Conference at Geneva this week. She wants all of us to disarm *down* to the level imposed on her by the Versailles Treaty, and as we won't, she says she is entitled to equality of military status and will therefore claim the right to arm *up* to other nations' level and won't waste time at a Disarmament Conference which doesn't disarm. Her attitude seems logical and has our paper's support. Lloyd George is also strongly supporting the German case. Things look pretty bad for the Conference—and for the League of Nations altogether.

Friday, September 23rd 1932. Viscount Snowden is said to be leaving the Government with the Samuelites. I sent J. L. Hodson to see him to-day at Tilford. Snowden asked Hodson to let me know that he was not sure the agreement to differ in the Cabinet was a big mistake, but, he added, 'it is easy to be wise after the event'. Snowden expressed surprise that Simon's note to Germany, which had caused a lot of discussion, got past the Cabinet Committee. 'I am a member of that Committee,' said Snowden, 'but I was in bed with a cold. A copy was sent to me for comment, but it didn't reach

me till last Saturday, and it had been sent to Herriot the day before.' This note from Simon was a reply to Germany's request for equal status. Its tone inflamed Germany and stiffened her in her refusal to attend a disarmament conference which did not give her equality of status. Snowden says that this German demand for equality is not a legal business.

Hodson's memorandum for me continues, 'Snowden says this German demand is a human passionate appeal and should have been treated as such. Germany has never had equal status or been treated as an equal. And anyhow, if we are to talk about legal obligations what about our legal obligation to disarm as we promised? Our Note says nothing about that. The Government, he says, is lagging far behind the general opinion of the country on the subject of disarmament. "There is practically no drastic proposal," says Snowden, "for disarmament that the country would not approve. I've told Robert Cecil so. I think the general situation is very serious. I don't think the bulk of Germany wants war with France but no doubt some of the young people do. The youngsters are going to universities as usual but there is nothing for them when they come out. They are in despair. You can't reason with despair." Referring to the *Herald's* statement that he has decided to resign, Snowden said, "I wonder anybody takes any notice of it." He said he rather likes Beaverbrook—believes he has generous streaks and doesn't care about money. Beaverbrook, he says, likes him (Snowden) too.'

CHAPTER XV

Simon Leaves the 'National Government'—Cold Shoulder for Lloyd George—Labour Revival—Intensified Mudsling War—H. G. Wells on This Sorry World—Lady Oxford at the Rectory of Stiffkey.

SATURDAY, *October 1st 1932.* Cummings has gone to Geneva. A letter from him tells me that he fancies the French would die before they would make a ten years' agreement leading to equality of armaments with Germany. He finds the French leaders at Geneva uncompromising and indeed, vindictive. They believe that Germany means to attack France, and that France must defend herself. Cummings mentions that he saw Simon at Geneva, and adds, 'You will be surprised to learn he approached me in his hotel and was most informative and friendly in spite of our sharp criticism, and seems to be in a very chastened mood.' Apparently Simon's view was that France must choose between agreeing with Germany now or turning her into a powerful enemy. . . . MacDonald has now reconstituted his Cabinet, following the withdrawal of Samuel and Company, and I went over to Wimbledon this morning to lunch with Layton to discuss the outlook. There is to be a big Liberal demonstration shortly at the Queen's Hall, and our idea is that there should be a new 'Progressive trail blazed for liberalism with a small "l".' A sort of national-international alternative to the present so-called national policy of the Government in world affairs. We are not disposed to attach too much importance to Ottawa and the tariff issue, so we want all shades of progressive thought to get together, even liberal-minded Tories and Labour people as well as those bearing the definite Liberal label. With thoughts like these in our minds it was with dismay that we heard that the coming Queen's Hall meeting is to be a narrow sort of Samuelite stunt under the auspices of the National Liberal Federation and Ramsay Muir. Lloyd George appears to have got his *congé*. It seems to me to be a hole-and-corner business

—no Lloyd George, no Lord Grey, no Lord Snowden. Why? It might even be a good thing to get Lord Cecil on the platform. It is true the organizers have asked Lloyd George to attend the meeting, but there is no request for him to speak. I told Layton I had never heard of such stupidity, and I suggested that we ought to call all these blokes together and read them a sort of Riot Act and say that we, the only national Liberal newspaper, intended going out, independent of any partisans, and calling for unity of the progressive forces chiefly on the disarmament plank. Layton agrees, but counsels moderation in boldness. One trouble regarding this Queen's Hall meeting is that Samuel, before he left the Government, initialled the Simon Note which irritated Germany. Of course I know there are temperamental difficulties about Lloyd George. It is idle to pretend otherwise. For instance, when Samuel left the Government I invited Lloyd George to make a friendly gesture in our columns. I suggested he should make a statement. I told him I should not wish for it to attack Samuel. Lloyd George replied: 'I am not satisfied. . . . I will say nothing yet. I must wait and see.'

Friday, October 7th 1932. At the Court of the Newspaper-makers at Stationers' Hall to-night Major Astor, of *The Times* spoke about the new type that paper has adopted—a minor typographical revolution. I asked H. G. Wells, who sat near me, what he thought about it. 'Well,' he said, 'we've heard a lot about *The Times* clear type, but what is more needed in all the papers is clear news . . . about Russia . . . about the world.'

As I don't seem to have much success at the moment getting Lloyd George to write for us (I suppose his tie-up with the American Hearst is the stumbling-block) I've been nibbling at Lord Snowden. He's willing to write on Disarmament, taking the line that you can no more humanize war than Christianize Hell, and urging, I suppose, going the whole hog for armaments abolition. He wants 100 guineas—says America is offering him 1,000 dollars an article for a series.

In 1932 the insane newspaper 'circulation war' was approaching a new peak. Two millions a day was the goal of the leaders. Colossal sums of money were being spent by the four 'popular' papers either 'buying' readers or 'holding' them. At the beginning of 1932 the positions in the race were as follows:

Daily Mail	1,835,020
Daily Express	1,652,313
Daily Herald	1,440,000
News Chronicle	1,205,910

Ours was a holding campaign on the *News Chronicle*. The insurance war having been dropped under an arrangement by which all the papers were on equal terms, money was being spent in new directions—competitions with astronomical cash prizes, free gifts, and door-to-door canvassing. During that year I reckon some £250,000 was spent on competitions by the four 'popular' papers, and, for periods, as much as £20,000 a week was lavished on free gifts and canvassing. The newspapers set up schools for training canvassers in the art of persuading housewives to change their daily newspaper. Gifts of all sorts in return for signing up as 'registered readers' were dangled before the astonished women. Free flannels for their husbands! Free washing-mangles for themselves!! The gifts ranged also from cameras to kettles, handbags to tea-sets—the gift books were a later development. Readers transferred from one paper to another and back again and stocked their cupboards with gifts. Newsagents had nightmares with all this chopping and changing about. I had chafed a long time about the stultification of editorial efforts that all this implied. I reckoned I was spending too much of my time (as editor and member of the Board) in planning and discussing sales promotion schemes to the exclusion of my real job of giving the public a good newspaper. During this mad racket the basic function of a newspaper—to provide the public with news and the interpretation of it—seemed to have been shelved by the popular Press. In the autumn of that year the Government set up a Lotteries Commission. Evidence

was to be taken on the subject of these newspaper prize competitions. I drew up a memorandum suggesting that the psychological moment had arrived for us in Bouverie Street to take a lead—a risky and a daring one admittedly, but one which might put us on good terms with what I felt sure was a public rapidly becoming more discriminating. I guess I was wrong there. The days of the appeal to mass cupidity are not yet over. The appeal to intelligence does not yet pay when dealing with the masses whether Tories, Liberals, or Socialists. However, in this moment of high-mindedness I drew up my memorandum, suggesting that we should cry a halt and not extend any of our competitions. We should give sanity a three months' trial. We should set aside, say, £20,000 (telling the public what we were doing) and if at the end of the three months we lost no appreciable ground with our readers we should release the £20,000 for legitimate newspaper development, bettering the news and editorial services, and so on. If the result were the reverse, then we would throw the £20,000 (and probably a deal more) into the competition scramble, regretfully, but determined not to be beaten—'bloody but unbowed', as it were. I suggested we should deposit the £20,000 with the Chairman of the Lotteries Commission, and invite other newspapers to join us in this experiment to test the public goodwill and give a gesture of sanity on the part of the British popular Press. Alas, I was much before my time:

> *Sunday, October 9th 1932.* My memorandum about these crazy newspaper competitions has been shelved. Layton is all with me in principle but has to defer to other considerations. Lord Cowdray has sent a note about my 'moral common sense' which he obviously rules out as impracticable. Others make it clear they think the risk is too great.

The circulation fight slackened for a period, by agreement, but it was renewed more vigorously than ever in 1933 by the offer of sets of books to readers, beginning with Dickens. The *Daily Express*, announcing its detestation of the whole business, said new readers were being bought at a cost of 8*s.* 3*d.* per head.

Tuesday, October 11th 1932. In trouble with Downing Street yesterday. We printed an article from Geneva by Cummings saying that Ramsay MacDonald had given a written pledge to back up Germany's claim for equal status *re* di armaments. From Downing Street came a peevish and irritable denial of the 'rumour' with a rebuke to those who published it for doing their best to make insoluble these difficult problems. At the Egyptian Legation reception in the evening I met Miss Rosenberg, Ramsay's attractive secretary, who can talk like a waterfall and tell you nothing. She said what we had published was very bad. 'Not half so bad as that peevish stuff from your show,' I said. 'Who wrote it?' She looked at me as if she would like to knife me, especially when I said I didn't mean to print it. Cummings sticks to his story anyhow, so we say nothing more. . . . From the Legation I went to the office about midnight to read the leader on Lloyd George, who to-day issued an explanation of his absence from the Herbert Samuel meeting at Queen's Hall on Wednesday. We think it a mischievous letter, harmful to the unity of the Progressives, and too rough on Samuel. When it was read out at our editorial conference, the feeling was there was nothing for it but to smack Lloyd George's bottom. This we did in the leader—a little more tenderly than I had expected, for Lloyd George takes no notice of gentle rebukes. Anyhow I shall be on his black list again now, no doubt. . . . These 'National' Ministers are getting a bit uppish. This morning Pybus (Transport Minister) rang up in a huff wanting me to go and see him about something our motoring correspondent had written. I asked Pybus if he were making a charge against our man concerning leakage of information, and he said that was about it. I said: 'The place for charges to be made against a member of the staff is here and in his presence. Otherwise, please put it in writing and send it to me.' 'Oh,' said Pybus, 'if that is your attitude I won't say any more.' Pybus has, I believe, been a newspaper director himself, on *The Times*, and ought to have a better idea of handling the Press.

The 'Liberal Revival Meeting' with Sir Herbert Samuel playing the leading part took place on Wednesday, October 12th. Our opinion that Lloyd George ought to have been there as a speaker was not palatable to the Asquithians, and Lady Oxford suggested that if I had any influence over our political editor I should warn him he was mistaken if he thought the country was pining for the return of Lloyd George. I was impatient at this, and its implied revival of the dismal squabbles of the past, and I wrote to Lady Oxford as follows:

> DEAR LADY OXFORD . . . I must admit I am editor of this paper and responsible for interpreting its policy. I hope I have some influence on the Political Editor, and such influence as I may possess is directed, as I think the paper shows, to promoting the unity of all people of progressive liberal thought, and to constructive discussion with an eye on the future rather than on the past.'

She replied in a letter I am not permitted to publish—one of amazing frankness about people and politics and containing a phrase that has always lingered in my mind—'The Almighty is a wonderful handicapper and will not give us everything.' I saw her at the 'revival' meeting, but not to speak to. My own reactions to that event are diarized thus:

> *Thursday, October 13th 1932.* Last night's meeting was a sad measure of our task in trying to bring about a national united Progressive front. I am sorry to say it, but I got very little inspiration from this rally of mostly elderly people. I noticed relatively few of the young present and no voice was given to them. It was a parade of the old stick-in-the-muds. Of course we've got to hold these veterans to do any good, but they are never going to lead a revival. . . . The white-haired chairman nearly had the meeting stillborn at the start by talking too long—and talking partisan stuff. Samuel was balanced, but ill at ease. I liked him as a man and as a thoughtful speaker, but he had neither the big stuff to say nor the big way to put it over. He had neither fire nor personality

—'charm' as Lady Oxford would put it. Moreover he (and all the rest) *read* practically all his speech. Spender noticed this too. He says it is a bad and growing habit among modern statesmen and politicians. Cowdray left the meeting immediately Samuel finished speaking. This was much commented on. Sinclair (Sir Archibald) delivered a collection of clichés spluttered out in false dramatic style *à la* Winston (but a poor imitation). Lord Lothian's speech content was by far the best, but he developed no enthusiasm and might have been addressing a summer school or a pack of undergrads in an Oxford lecture-room. Isaac Foot was good and witty and got the audience into something like good humour. Ramsay Muir was colourless and did not know when to sit down. Then Mrs. Wintringham. All rather like a Band of Hope. As Robert Lynd, whom I had dragged along with me, said, 'These people must be terribly in earnest; their speeches are so dull.'

Lady Snowden, whom I met to-day, was very disappointed. She went hoping to hear an enthusiastic appeal to all people of liberal and progressive ideas. I am not happy about this meeting either for our paper or the Liberal Party. The young folk should have had an innings—Bernays or Dingle Foot—to sound a new forward cry in these changing times. If we as a paper tie ourselves narrowly to these old-fashioned Liberal people—or any other section of the party—well, I'm afraid we are undone, as I'm afraid they are. I feel the moment was never so ripe as now for vigorous independence on our part—an audacious positive policy with our wagon hitched with single purpose to the star of liberalism with a small 'l'. Liberalism is not the exclusion of anybody because of personalities or manners. He would be a fool (and no liberal) who would say even Simon must never be allowed back in the fold, although Lloyd George may be worth a hundred of him. The highest cheers at the meeting came when Disarmament was mentioned. Chatter about tariffs and Free Trade raised nobody off his seat. Why not a new declared policy for us—(1) Complete political independence (we have it already but are not audacious

enough about it). (2) Cessation of crazy big cash competitions. (3) A Concentration on being the best *news*paper? Cummings, to whom I wrote on these lines some days ago, replies from Geneva: 'I agree with every word. You know pretty well what my ideas are about "audacity", and we shall never be audacious in the best sense of the word if we try to conform day by day to a narrow party point of view on the old lines. Parties, political ideas, groupings, political, economic, and social conceptions are changing before our eyes: and to hold attention or do any good we shall have to preach a bigger and bolder doctrine of Life and sometimes cut right across not only ancient party lines but also across some ancient long-standing newspaper traditions. I quite realize that can't be done in a hurry, without seeing where we are going. But you have the root of the matter in you and I shall look to you to set the pace! I am sure W. T. Layton, too, with his comprehensive mind, has the right intellectual grasp of human affairs and will move surely in the same direction and give us the necessary stimulus—if only he doesn't get too deeply involved in the official side of the national administration. I'm aware of the John Bullish strain in my own make-up, but the country, the Government, and all parties need a jolting up for constructive leadership. My contacts here with statesmen, officials, journalists, and others from all over the world convince me that Britain is still the power that the whole world looks to. We have a tremendous opportunity to change the face of things, and impose our will for peace and security on the nations. Yet we keep on missing the band. It irritates me beyond expression not to be able to defend or justify my own country by tongue or pen. Our international policy, or the absence of it, is a sheer disaster.'

I met Lady Snowden at lunch at the Langham Hotel to-day with Gladstone Murray, of the B.B.C., and had a long talk with her. She and her husband interest me very much because I have been puzzled why they became Viscount and Viscountess and went in with MacDonald and the 'National' Government. Snowden, of course, came out the other day with Samuel and the Liberal

Ministers. Lady Snowden said her husband's taking a title was chiefly a matter of his health. When the crisis came last year, she said, Philip had to remain somehow in politics or he would have died. 'Neither of us have much interest in titles—but it provided a way—a platform —he had to keep in the picture.' . . . To-night I called with Robert Lynd at Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street. Robert is a soothing influence at the end of a busy day . . . and I felt I owed him a drink for his punishment at that miserable meeting last night. Anderton's is occasionally a retreat for Robert at the close of the day. Downstairs you find him with a load of new books under his arm, among a curious mixture of Fleet Street business folk, or journalists like Bone of the *Manchester Guardian* or Joe Grigg of the *New York Sun*. Apart from these, few of the regular *habitués*, I suppose, know the identity of Robert, standing there, rather bent, like a huge question mark, with his kindly, distinguished face and his glittering Irish eyes, missing nothing. He would be eagerly welcomed in any big club or house, or at any gathering of the highbrows or the 'climbers'—yet he prefers to chat awhile with friends in the ordinary Fleet Street hostelry. That's because, I guess, he prefers the company of ordinary folk.

Friday, October 14th 1932. H. G. Wells came to my Friday editorial luncheon to-day. Layton and Wells had a lively duel of words on putting this sorry world in order. Wells was for a new scheme, without profit as the mainspring; Layton was for reconstruction on the basis of the old capitalistic order. Cummings began to talk of 'five hundred years hence' and Wells butted in that 'In five hundred years we shall only be beginning to learn to read and write'. I asked what that meant. He argued that we were deteriorating and becoming less civilized. We were putting the brake on education and progress. Vested interests were preventing the use of new inventions. All was for 'profit' of a few. We were sinking back slowly but surely and 'civilization' would end and then we should start upward again—that was what he meant when he said we should only be starting to read and

write five hundred years hence. He seemed to me to belie his belief in the decay of education when he said his books on economics and social questions sold better now than his novels—'There's more money in economics than fiction these days.' A good hint for the newspaper, I thought. People are taking more interest in important things. The argument went on as to what incentive could take the place of profit. Wells said, 'Take Science. There are dozens of young men going in for science who know from the start there is no money in it. They are told so—they are warned that big motor-cars, wine, women, and song and all that sort of attraction will not come their way. They may not even be able to marry. . . . They know that, yet are content to go on; their main reward the knowledge that they are helping humanity forward. There are scores of people like them ready to work for other things than material profit.' I think everybody who heard him agreed—and agreed too, that the idea behind all he said is growing. Layton would not go all the way with this dream, however, and Wells chaffed him as something like a real Conservative reactionary, hidebound to old economic tradition. Layton could see much of the idealism of Wells worked out in the present framework of things and once or twice his Radicalism led Wells to say, 'We are getting you on. In the end we shall be almost in complete agreement.' Wells said that the abolition of private profit would not destroy initiative or the eternal human ambition to go one better than the other fellow. As long as human nature lasted men would try to beat each other: they would have their jealousies and vanities and these would be satisfied by pride in better service and the rewards of the approbation of their fellows—but there was no need to mark that by 'profit' and the material ascendancy it gave one over others. So the talk went on while Wells sipped his Liebfraumilch and water and ate his potato-less steak (he had warned me that he was inclined to diabetes and had to be careful of his food and drink). He said that the chief snag was that it seemed impossible at the moment to find any man, or body of men, capable of reorganizing the world and its

economics on a basis excluding profit, although he admitted Russia was having a shot at it. But he did not think Communism was good enough. His ideal was something far better than Communism—something with a sort of religious impulse (he took pains to explain that he was speaking in no metaphysical sense) as the driving force. Curious that, in another way, Wells the rationalist should be saying in effect what many of our statesmen and spiritual leaders are saying—that what the world wants to pull it out of crisis is a spiritual revival, a sort of religious urge running through the practical framework of politics and statesmanship. This is what we have been saying about the Liberal Party and its need for leadership and inspiration. If against the forces of reaction as represented by a big section of Toryism we could mobilize Progressive liberal international thought with a touch of this altruism as the common focal point what big things we might live to see. The Christian ethics would do—but then all parties would say they are Christian, and the Tories would object we were stealing their thunder and Union Jacks. Hugh Redwood talked of a sort of 'Christian Party'—but that label would never do. As Wells said, he was not thinking in metaphysical terms, but of that impulse in all of us best indicated by the word 'religious'. We talked again of Russia and Wells thought she was going back a bit. The 'excommunication' of Trotsky was not a good sign. Communism which prohibited freedom of speech was not good enough. When he left (to play Badminton for an hour—'the best way I find of taking exercise and getting in a sweat to keep me fit') he said he had enjoyed it all immensely. 'Do ask me again, will you?' he said.

Saturday, October 22nd 1932. Last Saturday night at Savage Club as 'Poy's' guest at House Dinner. Strube, *Express* cartoonist, sat next to me and told me his life story—son of a Charing Cross Road publican, learnt to draw at night schools and at Hassall's school; was 'warned off' black and white; stuck to it; got a cartoon accepted for £1 1*s.* 0*d.* by *Daily Express*; got a regular commission through Blumenfeld. Went to live at pub at Hampstead

because his mother wanted to, as his father was dead. A very cheery and likeable fellow whom everybody calls 'George', though his name is 'Arthur'.

It would seem from my diary that there never was a year when so much was wrong with the world as 1932. There are frequent entries about the stubborn Depression, the nightmare of the American Debt, the weary quest for Disarmament, the mysteries and challenge of Russia, the shadow of Hitler over Germany, the dismal Unemployment problem here. Editing a newspaper was a job without much cheer, for the news of the world was one long daily wail. Even Lady Oxford became infected with the national dumps and one day in October I received a letter from her for publication. I did not print it fully (the reason I explain later) but as follows:

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

SIR,

We seem to be living in a period of Fear. The right thing is *discussed* at immense length in expensive conferences, but never *done*:

In *Diplomacy*—where our Foreign Office is more applauded in the Commons than in the Country;

In *Commerce*—where the whole world knows that Tariffs have been a curse;

In *Economics*—where the advice of financial experts has been a see-saw between the patriotism and poltroonery of saving and spending;

In the *Church of England*—which is playing blind man's buff daily with divorce.

Confining myself to another aspect of the Church, the Stiffkey case has only brought a floodlight upon a state of affairs which has long existed.

To the lay mind there is something wrong somewhere if a Church cannot get rid of a rector who has been an object of scandal and ridicule without both the bishop and the parson incurring tremendous expenses.

MARGOT OXFORD

NORTH BERWICK,
Sunday

It was the part about the Rector of Stiffkey that I felt it my duty to 'censor' if I did not want to be hauled up before the law. In 1932, the rector, the Rev. Harold Davidson, became the centre of one of the most sensational trials in English Church history. Formerly an actor, Davidson had served twenty-six years in his small Norfolk parish when, in 1932, he was found guilty at Norwich Consistory Court of charges concerning his moral conduct. Despite appeal he was deposed and degraded, the case costing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners more than £7,000. Among 'stunts' devised by Davidson to raise money to pay for his defence was his appearance in a barrel at Blackpool, and it was a reference to this affair that I took out of Lady Oxford's letter. I wrote and explained to her what I had done and why, and this was her typically feminine reply:

MILTON LODGE,
NORTH BERWICK,
October 28th 1932

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I was sorry you left out my sentence, 'I would like to know if there are many parishes', etc. It was the whole point of the letter. It was not the Rector of Stiffkey but the Church of England which was in the barrel. I go to London for good to-morrow.

Yours,
MARGOT OXFORD

(*Note:* The Rector of Stiffkey fasted in his barrel and was charged with attempting suicide by starvation but was found not guilty. He brought an action against Blackpool Corporation and was awarded £382 damages. In July 1937 he was killed by a lion in a 3*d.* sideshow at Skegness where he was appearing.)

Saturday, November 5th 1932. Spoke on Thursday at Oxford Union against the motion 'That this house welcomes the Atlantic'. Everybody says the Union audience is the most difficult in the world and the thing to do is to say how nervous you are—which I did, but to tell the

truth I never felt less nervous in my life. Giles Playfair spoke brilliantly—best of the bunch. . . . Returned to town to entertain actress Evelyn Laye at luncheon. She's going to write for us on keeping fit for women—'How to Be Fit Though Slim', 'Safe Slimming', and that sort of thing. So many women are making wrecks of themselves. She is very pretty and quite interesting to talk to, and very fond of riding.

Thursday, 10th November 1932. Lunched at Printing House Square with *The Times* Board at invitation of Major Astor. Neville Chamberlain and E. V. Knox, new editor of *Punch*, also there. Met two of the Walters—of the family that founded *The Times*. One of them, a cheery old boy, laughingly said he wondered why people read *The Times*, unless for the crossword.

CHAPTER XVI

Samuel Takes the Liberal Helm—Lloyd George Spills a Mouthful at Churt—Another Gladstone Wanted—A Peep at the Memoirs—The 'Eton-Balliol Gang'—Asquith a Good Fellow but no War Winner—The 'Push and Go' Men—Views on the Press.

LLOYD GEORGE and politics come back noticeably to my diary with the opening of the Parliamentary session in November 1932. I have a note about attending the 'eve of Parliament' reception at Lady Londonderry's place to meet the Prime Minister, and hearing a suggestion (I don't know from whom) that it might be a good thing if the Prime Minister went to Washington as British Ambassador after his retirement. The same authority spoke of MacDonald's vagueness of mind and woolly-headedness, but said his saving grace was that he handled Cabinet meetings well. I heard some talk of the American Debt and an emphatic opinion that we were going to pay up the instalment falling due and later on press for some form of cancellation. I heard criticism too of Neville Chamberlain (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) 'swanking about the good position of this country—compared with a year ago—with £130,000,000 paid off and a balanced budget, and then expecting America to smile benignly on us when we went to them cap in hand'. There were discussions, too, as we took our refreshments, about the rising fortunes of the continental dictatorships. On this point, by the way, I see in my diary a note of a luncheon with Sir John Reith, Director-General of the B.B.C. He gave me the impression that he thought there may be some virtue in dictatorship, at least for putting the world on its feet again. He said that the trouble to-day in the democratic countries was that those in power were afraid of the ballot-box.

As for Lloyd George, I was angling hard for his book of memoirs, which I wanted for serial publication in our newspaper, but he was proving a difficult fish to catch. A former member of our literary staff, Norman Collins, who left us about this time to join Victor Gollancz, the publisher,

had been going down to Churt on occasional week-ends to help with some friendly advice *re* revision. I fondly but erroneously hoped this would give me a valuable handle in my negotiations. I remember meeting Gollancz at a Book Society's luncheon. He was spluttering with indignation about Lloyd George and his book. Apparently he too had been banking on Collins, but an offer he had made for Lloyd George's book in writing had not been accepted.

My feeling about this book was that, as leading Liberal paper, we could not afford to let any other newspaper have the privilege of publishing it in serial form, whatever the cost to us. Not everybody shared my view. When people like Lord Cowdray, who had set their faces like granite against men more progressive than themselves, and who didn't want to see Lloyd George getting publicity at any price, bluntly said it didn't matter whether we got the book or not, I chafed at the way personal prejudice could hamper me in what I considered good newspaper business. However, by arguing till I got hot under the collar that our paper could not afford to let Lloyd George be featured elsewhere, I got authority to go up to £5,000. Thus armed, I began to stalk Lloyd George. I was somewhat ashamed of the calibre of my gun, for I knew at heart it was not big enough to bring me my prize; but hope, the one luxury all men can enjoy, spurred me on. When I saw Lloyd George he said at the outset that he felt he had some moral obligation in the matter to Lord Camrose (owner of the *Daily Telegraph*)—not so moral, of course, said he, wagging a fat little finger at me, that he would be precluded from listening to suggestions from other quarters. Then I fired my £5,000 gun all at one bang and he promptly changed the subject and I felt that morality would win hands down. I remember Lord Cowdray's subsequent smile of satisfaction when I told him I didn't think we would be in the running for Lloyd George's book. His attitude was as much as to congratulate me on a lucky escape from letting the paper in for a big waste of money. I saw it was hopeless to ask for authority to bid higher. Even at this distance I still think it was a mistake to let our rapidly ascending rival, the *Daily Telegraph* (they paid £25,000 to Lloyd George) get away with it, whatever

the price. It was a mistake of newspaper history and the *Telegraph* reaped the reward, as its subsequent great increase of sales showed.

Friday, January 27th 1933. Went down to Churt to lunch and spend afternoon with Lloyd George, who has recently celebrated his seventieth birthday. Much has happened since our last meeting—and since my last diary entry. For instance, we've paid an instalment to the Yankees (and the French haven't, nor any one else) but the world goes on merrily. Nothing dreadful seems to have happened or to be about to happen—except that Ramsay MacDonald and Simon and Runciman are more than ever the prisoners of the Tories, and the state of the Liberal 'party' under Samuel's leadership seems to go from bad to worse. He still hasn't taken the plunge into straight opposition to the 'National' Government, though there are signs that he is stripping. I met Samuel on the boat crossing to France the other day on the way to Switzerland for the winter sports. It was in the second class—which is about right for the Liberal Party these days. He seems aloof, without boldness or the common touch. In a jocular way I mentioned politics to him and he said:

'But you are not interviewing me, are you?'

'Good Lord, Sir Herbert,' I said, 'I don't want to interview you, or any one else, on politics or any other subject. I'm on holiday and I hope you are.'

Meetings are afoot again with a view to saving the Liberal Party—getting a move on to stop the drift of the young Radicals towards Labour—so there was a lot to talk about to Lloyd George to-day and he didn't disappoint me. As I drove up in my car he came from his comfortable room along the corridor to meet me, most sprightly of step.

His table near the homely log fire was loaded with books. The top one, which I fancy he had been reading when I arrived, was by Theodore Roosevelt, the one-time American President, and its title was *Fear God and Take Your Own Part.* In a few minutes Lloyd George showed me that was just what *he* intended to do as regarded

politics. As we were beginning our pow-wow with a few pleasantries—I was fencing to see what he wanted to open with—the telephone bell rang. He went out of the room for a moment and came back saying:

'Drat you newspapermen. That's the *Star*, a man named Morgan . . . wants to know if I am accepting the invitation to hear Samuel's speech on policy on February 6th.'

'You haven't told him?'

'I'm saying nothing yet.'

'No—keep it for me. Tell me for the *News Chronicle*.'

'I'll talk about that later.'

When he did talk about it he spilled a mouthful, as the Americans say, and although I had come to see him in a personal sense, I found myself dragged in to do a job of work and write up a news 'interview' with him on that subject. He was much annoyed at the 'cheap printed card with just my name written in,' which he had received inviting him to Samuel's meeting, with no invitation to speak. He walked up and down the room and said hotly:

'Is that the sort of invitation to send to an old leader of the Liberal Party, an ex-Prime Minister, too? It is an insult. But it is characteristic. Samuel has no bigness about him—no understanding. I hope you will reprint the card in your paper. Will you? Very well, I'll ring up Tweed and you can talk to him about sending it to your office so that you will have it when you get back. It was sent to my office. I certainly am not going to accept. I am summoned to a luncheon—to a social affair, to sit and hear Samuel deliver this great pronouncement of future Liberal policy—I, an ex-Leader of the party and an ex-Prime Minister. Don't you think it disgraceful? If I went there I should have no right to get up and speak. Why have not some of us Liberal leaders been invited into consultation first? Geronwy Owen, who has fought a Tory and a Labour man should have been consulted. My son Gwilym, an ex-Minister, had the right to expect to be called in. Megan, no—she has not been in the ministry. The others have. Even

Sir John Simon and Runciman have not been consulted. All that I object to they have the right to object to also. Times *have* changed. Asquith would never have done it this way. He was a big man—nothing petty about him. He would have written me—and others—a personal note, and we would have had a talk beforehand. That's what happened when we united in 1923 and we didn't take long about it to come to an understanding. But how can I stultify myself by going to sit and listen to Samuel telling us what has been decided shall be the future policy of the great Liberal Party? I, an older leader, have never been invited to the consultations that have fashioned this coming great pronouncement, and I, too, like Geronwy Owen and my son, have fought at the election against Tories and for Free Trade. If the Liberal candidates, including me, had been invited to a consultation and discussion of a pronouncement, I would have attended. If this is called an attempt to re-unite the Liberal Party it is a queer way of doing it.'

'May it not be,' I said, 'that your recent statement that you had finished with official Liberalism has some bearing on the matter?'

'Then why ask me to the meeting at all? No. That's off the point. I could have understood it before, when they were in passive support of the National Government (which I have never been) but now that they are talking of active opposition with a new Liberal policy it is wrong. There should have been consultations to which all of us should have been invited.'

We went in to lunch—grape-fruit, chicken with chopped carrots, sprouts and mashed potatoes, and mince tart with thick cream. Lloyd George had his usual buttermilk to drink and he gave me claret. He ate quickly and with great zest, and paid little attention to how I was getting on with my meal save that he pressed on me a second helping of chicken and especially the carrots (and had a good second helping himself) 'because these carrots are cooked the Welsh way, chopped up and not cut in strips'. I reminded him that was the Lancashire way too and he said:

'Why, where do you come from?'

I was not very flattered that he did not know.

'Bolton, near Manchester,' I said.

'Then we are neighbours from the same parts,' he said. 'I like the Lancashire people. You know they are not so dour as the Yorkshire people. They are very humorous and full-blooded. They have more of the common touch.'

Over luncheon the conversation warmed up and touched on all subjects of world affairs and human beings. All most enjoyable. I felt that nothing he was saying was superfluous. Everything mattered. Then we went back to his cosy sitting-room to digestion and more talk. His thoughts were still running on his position *vis-à-vis* the wobbling Liberal Party, and, as on my former visit, he led me back in political history to the days of Gladstone.

'This situation of Liberalism to-day is no new thing,' he said, 'it is just a case of history repeating itself. It is insinuated that I am the wild vulgarian whom no one respectable wants to work with, who can't be trusted because of his disruptive ideas. They used to say all that of Gladstone. Read your history. Read about Gladstone and Hartington. I remember it all so vividly. I was a boy at the time—a boy of about fifteen. Gladstone could not stomach the Whigs, and they could not stomach him. He went off on his own on the Midlothian campaign. He was deserted by his former colleagues. He was ostracized as being too wild for the respectable Liberals. He was Ishmael. But the country was listening to him. The election brought the Liberals into overwhelming power. Then the Hartington crowd said what a fine victory had been won by them and that Hartington should be Prime Minister. But it was Gladstone who had won that election, the man whose 'vulgar' methods and imagination and inspired leadership had caught the hopes of the people. So there arose objections to his being robbed of the leadership, and do you know who did it? Do you know who made him Prime Minister? It was the *Daily News*. They did it. I think a man called Hill was behind it. Only a newspaper could have done it in those days. You could do the same thing now. Only

a newspaper like yours taking a bold and persistent lead could restore Liberalism to-day. You can tell how vividly I remember this about Gladstone—although I was only a boy—when I tell you it was in front of Robert's shop in Portmadoc that I got the *Daily News* with the great news about Gladstone. I can see myself there as if it were to-day getting hold of the paper. Yes, all the hard things that are said about me to-day were said about Gladstone in 1880. . . . But you can take more recent times. Do you remember my Limehouse speech of twenty-odd years ago and the furore it created—an outrage, the limit in mad extremity and vulgarity and so on? I was reading it over the other day. It's milk and water. In these advanced days it reads so mild one wonders what all the fuss was about. What I said then everybody says now.'

'New ideas are generally at first painful,' I said. 'You were just ahead of the band.'

'That's it.' He was silent for a moment except for those little 'Hm . . . hm' grunts. I wondered if he were getting tired of talking and wanted me to go. But I was soon reassured. There were columns to get off his chest yet. He was enjoying himself in this riot of reminiscence. On the last occasion he had walked me and talked me about his farm and sent me off home with a basket of home-grown Lloyd George raspberries. Nothing about the farm to-day! My host to-day was not the farmer but the politician again. Is that a sign?

I am recording our talk as the points come back to me, and not in sequence. I must go back to the luncheon for a moment. I had mentioned Lloyd George's coming book of memoirs—one of the reasons for my visit, for he is still coy about my recent offer, saying neither 'yes' nor 'no'. I asked casually, to open the subject, if he intended to include in his book the Cabinet minute on the War Debts settlement by Baldwin in 1922; and I said I had always understood that Baldwin had no objection to its being published, although when the question was recently raised in the House (and Lloyd George asked for its publication) Baldwin had not seemed enthusiastic. The

Prime Minister declined to sanction publication and there was talk of the prison penalties for disclosure of Cabinet secrets. I asked Lloyd George if he would risk it.

'Talk of prison is rubbish,' he said.

'They wouldn't do that,' I said. 'It would be making you the most wonderful present. They would not dare.'

'Of course not,' he went on. 'What I *will* do about anything of that sort in my book is to submit it to Maurice Hankey. That is the accepted and correct thing to do and I will do it and agree to his judgment. He knows and is broadminded and has no puny fears. What he advises I will do, but only if it is his own free advice and not ordered by others. I see no reason why it should not be published.'

I said I understood that Baldwin, who resented the criticism of his United States Debt settlement, had said that if and when the Cabinet minute of August 1922 were made public, it would be seen whether the part he played were justified.

'Yes,' said Lloyd George, 'Baldwin always said he would not mind publication. I suppose others got cold feet when they read it again—afraid of letting America see some of the things we said at the time. But why shouldn't America be told, among other things, that in the War she lost about as many men as Australia?'

We talked of George Lansbury and Snowden and the Labour Party. Of 'Philip' Snowden Lloyd George spoke as the relentless, inelastic stickler for old theories. Snowden has sent a letter supporting the independent Liberal candidate in East Fife, who is opposing all the party machines and the National Government. Lloyd George shrugged his shoulders at 'Philip's' bid. He does not think it will cut much ice or do Keir (the Liberal candidate) much good. It will attract none of the Labour crowd and very few Liberals. I thought I detected a touch of jealousy at Snowden's irruption on behalf of a Liberal candidate. Keir, prompted by our man, Cummings, has been saying nothing about Lloyd George. His candidature is spontaneous and Cummings thinks it would be a tactical error for Lloyd George to butt in and let it be

thought he was behind Keir. Lloyd George frowned as I mentioned this to him. He does not like others making decisions of this sort and keeping him in the background, and he dropped a broad hint that he did not entirely agree and would probably send a message of encouragement to Keir 'when the time is ripe'. Lloyd George said there was no room for middle parties He obviously sees the 'Whigs' packing up and going Tory and the Radicals and Labour getting closer together as a Progressive Opposition, with extremists of all sorts in the corner. Is he right? He spoke very kindly of 'old George Lansbury', leader of the Labour Party. 'Don't be mistaken about him. He is not the sentimental evangelical lots of you think him. He is a very wise, a very shrewd man.' He talked of Samuel again, and of his not having the bigness and foresight to go into opposition long ago. Now he was being driven to it. Leadership! Stuff!! I asked why Samuel had been so stubborn. It was rumoured the King might have had influence with him, urging his remaining in the National Government, or, at least, not offering opposition, in the interests of national unity. 'That has been said,' mused Lloyd George, 'and there may be something in it, as also in Ramsay MacDonald's case.' About Ramsay he said, 'I don't think he's fit to carry on in times like these. Of course it's not so bad as in war-time. Yet in a way it is. Ramsay is a good peace-time man—most men are—when all is going well. But he's not the man for war or crisis, not as he is now.' We returned to the subject of Lloyd George's memoirs. 'I have not decided publication yet. Curtis Browne is looking through the manuscripts. I may wait a bit till things are better in America. They pay better there than in England. It's an important market for me. . . . I'll show you some of the manuscript. What part would you like?'

'Can I read your chapter that brings in Edward Grey?'

He chuckled. 'Ah, you have heard something.' He left the room while I read it.

'Well,' he cried, rubbing his hands and striding briskly into the room again a few minutes later.

'Pretty strong meat,' I said. 'You weren't very fond of him?'

'I was not,' said Lloyd George, sinking into an easy chair and playing with his cigar. 'As I say in the book, he never did much. He had the air and calibre of a county magistrate who prides himself on being fair to everybody —*except poachers.*'

'You are pretty hard on him.'

'But it's all true. If I write my memoirs I must report things and people as I saw them. I must be candid. I am not uncharitable. I could say a lot more than I do. It is not unkind or malicious, but it is of course hard-hitting. Do you see any objection to anything?'

'Not at all. But on what you have written I can suggest a very good heading for the chapter.'

'Yes, what is it?'

' "The Man Who Could Have Stopped The War".'

'That's it,' and Lloyd George slapped his knee. 'That's very true. He could. But he was slow and a blunderer with very little travel experience or knowledge of foreign peoples and their mentalities. The idea of Grey as a great statesmanlike Foreign Minister is all wrong. He was too aloof. He paid less attention to affairs than many people think, or at least less attention to the job of letting his colleagues know. He was not a great figure at the Cabinet: others used to do more of the discussing and he would drift in later in a snobbish off-hand way. He didn't know what was going on and would not let others believe they did. He handled the pre-War situation badly and especially the events immediately preceding the War, and, as my memoirs show, I believe a different man and different methods would probably have prevented war.'

Lloyd George spoke strongly but without vehemence. In my mind was a picture of Grey as I remembered him —the tall, dignified figure, the country lover, the bird-lover, the man who in later life had almost lost the immeasurable gift of sight. I saw him on platforms speaking with the Winchester–Balliol 'effortless superiority'. I wondered if all Lloyd George said about him could be

true. These two men now of seventy or thereabouts had worked long together. The War had put them both well in world limelight. They had never liked each other. Grey had undoubtedly said cutting things about Lloyd George. Was it that one had the common touch and the other had not? Something of this I put to Lloyd George, and, rising to stand with his back to the cheerful log fire, he said:

'I was never one of them—the Eton-Balliol gang. Of course Asquith was more or less of the same schooling, but I except him. He was miles ahead of any of them and not petty or self-sufficient. Yes, I except Asquith. He was a human fellow really and with an understanding of people . . . but some of the others, like Grey, full of the exclusive pomp of whiggery . . . no . . . I did not like them and they did not like me . . . the vulgarian . . . the man from the people. That's true . . . hm . . . hm . . .'

'They must be clever in some way,' I said, 'one of the most amazing things to me has been the successful undergrounding against you of the past few years. When I was in Australia seven years ago, looking at the political picture here with the advantage of distance, I, and many others, felt it was only a matter of comparatively brief time before you would be back in the saddle of a virile Liberalism. But I had not been long back in England before I felt strong underground forces again you. Even among former Radicals in my native Lancashire—men who had been your staunchest supporters—I found wagging heads and heard that slogan which has gone all through the land, "Lloyd George can't be trusted". It was very cleverly worked and I'm afraid the propaganda against you often got home through its merciless persistency. Have you any explanation of it? Have you ever thought if it was definitely engineered and by whom?'

Lloyd George glowered. He does not like talking about the successes of his opponents.

'Yes . . . undergrounding . . . that's it,' he said staccato, 'a vile and malicious campaign . . . yes, I know

. . . I know . . . I know all about that undergrounding . . . that's the word . . . hm . . . hm . . .'

I said I was glad to hear he liked Asquith, and his face brightened again, but he had some criticism to make there too. He said Asquith's mind when he was Prime Minister, even during the War, was often on other things than his job. Asquith was a lover of life and what it had to give, and his thoughts were often elsewhere even at the most vital Cabinet meetings. 'A good fellow, but running a war was not his job.'

I picked up the folder of MSS. containing Lloyd George's chapters on the Ministry of Munitions. 'Oh, you would like to read that? You'll get the truth there. I'll be back in a few minutes.' He left me alone with the manuscript dealing with his work as the organizer and controller of the most colossal effort ever made at producing the stuff to kill human beings *en masse*. He mentioned how his uncle Richard Lloyd, I think—had written from North Wales and implored him not take to on the job—but war was war, and there was nothing more to be said. When Lloyd George rejoined me I told him that what had interested me especially in the chapter was his method of selecting his right-hand men.

'Ah, that's the vital thing,' he said, 'but what a task! So many leaders will not select brilliant helpers because they think they may out-rival their boss. That's all wrong. Get all the best brains you can around you. Their glory is all reflected on you. Only petty men are afraid of giving great ability a chance—but there are a lot of petty people like that in high positions. Give me a leader who has enough pluck and brains to select others with pluck and brains to work alongside him.'

I reminded him of his quest at the time we were speaking of for men of 'push and go'. He laughed.

'Yes, we called for "push and go" men because it sounded well and had a good psychological effect on the public, but many of the so-called "push and go" men were really just ordinary slugs. I used to laugh as I saw some of these men of "push and go" as you Pressmen were

calling them—and so would you have done.' I got the impression that he would have liked to give many of them the 'push and go' and replace them by others with fewer pretentions and more guts. He told me of his many difficulties at the munitions job. There was a story about Russia and how our statesmen bungled. He thought the revolution there had been inevitable, but had we shown more sense might have taken a different turn, with Russia still on the side of the Allies. The story related to his saving from the sack one of our chief military men concerned with Russia. Kitchener and others were dissatisfied and were about to recall him.

'But,' said Lloyd George, 'I knew he was one of the best men we had. They didn't like his brains and his knowledge and his initiative. He knew Russia from end to end. He knew all the Russian generals and all about them. It was said he had had affairs with all their wives. And this was the man they had decided to dispense with at a critical time. It was the height of folly and I walked across to Asquith and told him it really could not be allowed. And it wasn't.'

He spoke briefly of modern Russia and the stupendous efforts and sacrifices to put through the Five Year Plan. He spoke kindly of the Soviet Ambassador in London, M. Maisky, as a 'very nice and able man—a bigger and better man than his predecessor, Sokolnikoff.' And when I said I liked Sokolnikoff too, he said, 'Oh, I know, and his charming wife. She was a big part of the brains at the Embassy, a beautiful and brilliant woman.'

We returned to the memoirs again. I said that publisher Gollancz was annoyed that Lloyd George had not let him publish the book following the negotiations they had had. Lloyd George said, 'Did he expect me to accept the first offer I received?'

I mentioned the American Debt question and he opened a broadside on our folly for paying the £30,000,000 last December. 'What was the good of that?' he said. 'With the world as it is there would have been no reproach in our saying we could not pay. It was a great mistake—a stupid mistake. What was the good of paying and

saying we were not going to pay any more? France was much cleverer. What advantage have *we* got?'

As the time came for me to go I said to Lloyd George, 'Well, we've had a most delightful talk on almost everything except newspapers. Now what about the future there.'

'Well,' he replied, 'the *Daily Herald* I think will get its two millions and lead you all in sale. I see a future for you and for the *Herald* because you both have definite political backing. You, for instance, have a 'core' of 600,000 to 800,000 Liberals and no one can take them away from you. It is a great and valuable asset; but the *Herald* has an increasing 'core' too, and it is a very good newspaper with a very clever man, Elias, behind it. As for the *Daily Mail*, Northcliffe was a great journalist. Rothermere is a great financier. What about his son Esmond? I do not know him well. The *Mail* (like the *Express*) was built up on personality. It has not the 'core' that you have. The papers I now want to see are your paper, the *Telegraph*, the *Herald*, the *Guardian*, and the *Express*. The *Telegraph* is becoming a very good paper, brightly presented and with good headlines. As for the *Express*, I like Beaverbrook, but he is elusive. He can say hard things, too. But he is a great personality and so long as he is there the *Express* will be in the picture. Is there any one to succeed him? What is his son Max like? As for you, you have a great chance with the *News Chronicle* if you can come in on this flowing tide and lead the Liberal Party where its present leaders have failed to do. A great newspaper can do it. You have the most brilliant staff of any paper in London. If you did nothing else for the paper your discovering of A. J. Cummings and your bringing him out has justified your presence there—also J. L. Hodson. Stuart Hodgson too is a good fellow, a fine and brilliant writer. But I fancy you are handicapped by the committee-mind. Your people listen too much to outside mediocre theorists and second raters. I know your handicap.'

Well, that gives me a lot of thought and of course it's all true. Our people are rather too susceptible to

parleying and delay till action is too late—to the League of Nations habit of procrastination. A newspaper lives from day to day as a recorder of things that happen (never mind the effect on your friends, political or otherwise)—not what you and your section of thought would like to see happen.

Well, I think that will do for this diary entry. It is about the longest I have ever made. It has cost me my week-end, for it's taken my Saturday and Sunday to jot it all down while fresh in my mind. I wonder if it's all a waste of time. I'm not so sure I would not rather have been indulging my secret fancy to write a novel or a play. Yet, after all, what better material could I have to write about than real live human beings prominent on the world stage? They are surely worth more while than fiction puppets.

Tuesday, February 7th 1933. The Samuel luncheon (about which Lloyd George talked to me at Churt) took place yesterday. Samuel made a great speech and that was all. Missed the bus again by failing to announce that he would lead his men across the floor of the House. To-day this spineless gang sat in their same old places in the Commons. Lloyd George is right when he says they are letting Liberalism down.

Sunday, February 12th 1933. Lord Riddell (chief proprietor of the *News of the World*) talked about Lloyd George to me to-day. We were lunching together at Walton Heath. Dummett, newly appointed Metropolitan magistrate at Bow Street, was there too. Riddell told me he is writing a Diary, 1916–22, and is doubtful whether he ought to submit it first to Lloyd George. I don't think he will. I asked if he were still friendly with Lloyd George. He said that the report he had ever quarrelled with him was untrue, but that he had discovered long ago that Lloyd George was hard to get on with unless you always agreed with him, so he (Riddell) had decided to keep out of his way to avoid friction. 'Otherwise, he said, 'we are and have been the best of friends.'

CHAPTER XVII

Russian Stupidities—A Week-end with Esmond Harmsworth —The Shadow of Hitler—Lady Oxford Torpedoes Dr. Rosenberg—Lord Snowden Raps my Knuckles—Lady Oxford and 'The Lloyd George Admirers'—Her 2 a.m. Letter.

RUSSIA and Germany were coming very much into the news. In April 1933 I sent Cummings to Moscow for the trial of the British engineers and Frank Hillier to Vienna for the expected 'Nazi' Putsch. In the meantime I went on a cruise to Madeira. Cummings, who has since described the Moscow Trial as his greatest news story, sent a preliminary message stating his opinion that the Soviet court were going to behave with fairness and propriety. Owing to the atmosphere of venom that hung about Anglo-Russian relations, and the stupid publicity in both countries, scarcely any one in Britain believed that a fair trial was possible. While I was away, the acting editor of our paper, suspicious as he well might be in the circumstances of the activities of the Soviet censors, and thinking that there might have been some tampering with Cummings' message, tried to get him on the 'phone to confirm its wording. Failing to get through he asked the British Foreign Office to get in touch with Cummings through our Moscow Embassy. An embassy official called on Cummings after midnight, and, when Cummings confirmed to him that the message received in London was the identical one he had sent from Moscow, this official misguidedly asked if he thought it were playing the game to send such a statement to England. Naturally Cummings went off the deep end at this impertinence. The facts were reported to me when I arrived at Gibraltar and I sent a message to my deputy in London—'Stick to Cummings'. There is no political journalist or special correspondent I know in whom I could so completely put my trust as Cummings. In this most exacting and highest form of newspaper work he has that impalpable sixth sense marking the difference between a first-class and a commonplace reporter. He is endowed with the essential gift in such work —the power not only of reporting the facts, but also of

interpreting them. His passion for truth and his refusal to conceal it at the behest of any vested interest, whether enemy or friend, is something to fortify any editor in carrying out his duty to the public. I sent Cummings to Moscow because I knew he would allow no dust to be thrown in his eager observant, true-seeing eye; no pulling of his sturdy British legs.

It will have been noticed that there are numerous entries in my diary about Russia and her representatives in London. Lest the pleasantries that may be found there are misunderstood, let me say that at no time was I under any illusion. As editor of a Liberal paper I felt we could not ignore Russia, as some papers did, or merely lampoon her and seek every chance of misrepresenting her, as others did. We had to try and tell as objectively as is humanly possible the facts about that great experiment with a new social and economic order whether we approved of it or whether we didn't. But I never hid from the Russians my dislike of their assaults on the fundamental conceptions of freedom, their childish attitude towards the world's Press and to foreign correspondents in their own capital. Every newspaper man knows that there were systematic cruelties in Russia which foreign correspondents allowed to remain in that country had to overlook, even, perhaps, to conceal. I got on well with the Russians I met at the Embassy in London, perhaps because I had a pre-War Russian background. I had travelled the country from Vladivostock through Manchuria to Moscow. I had stayed in Irkutsk, the capital of Siberia, and in Moscow. I knew of the glamours and the pre-War glitter of that city, and of the sinister sordidness of what I call the backwoods of Russia reaching out into far Siberia. Of course my Russian Embassy friends said that this experience went for nothing at all; that I had no more idea of the modern Russia than I had of the moon. Perhaps they were right. I never could escape feeling when amongst them that at heart they were really contemptuous of our Liberalism and especially the variety existing in those days. They had much more respect and admiration for the forthright Winston Churchill and Joynson Hicks than they had for any Liberal leader. They tolerated us Liberals, indeed cultivated our

paper as one of the few in England that gave them a fair deal and tried to record events in Russia in a sane and liberal temper, as compared with the frantic and vehement 'Red chasers' of other sections of the popular Press. I remember one or two rather interesting collisions with Russian stupidity regarding newspaper folk. The first was when it had been arranged for a British Trade Delegation to visit Russia, and I received an intimation from a publicity agent in London that a correspondent of our paper would be welcomed if we sent him with the Commission. I accepted, and arranged to send F. A. Mackenzie, a distinguished correspondent who knew Russia very well, and, I believe, had a fair working knowledge of the language. To my surprise within a day or two I received a telegram direct from the Polit-Bureau in Moscow that Mackenzie was not acceptable to the Soviet Government and would I please submit another name for their approval! I replied at once that I would do nothing of the kind and that our paper would not now be represented; that the time had not yet arrived when the Soviet Government could assume to itself the powers of appointing members of our staff. It did not add to my popularity with the Soviet Embassy in London when I published the facts about this, as I felt it was my duty to do. The second notable occasion was some time later when our then Moscow correspondent was on leave for a few days in London. The day before he was due to return to Moscow, a member of the staff of the Soviet Embassy sought an interview with me in Bouverie Street. He said he came as a friend, quite unofficially. He said, 'Your correspondent is in England. Do you intend to let him return to Moscow?' 'Most certainly,' I said, 'he returns to-morrow.' 'Then let me tell you you will be doing him a service if you do not let him go back.' I stopped the man at once and said, 'Wait'. I pressed a bell. My secretary came in. I asked her to call the foreign editor at once. When he arrived I said to the Russian, 'Will you now repeat what you have said to me about our correspondent?' 'But no,' he said, 'you are making this official. I came here just as a friend, and I do not want to make this an official matter.' I told him that I *was* making an official matter of it and that I had no

use for Russian Secret Police or Ogpu methods in a British newspaper office, and as he appeared to be making damaging suggestions regarding our correspondent I would require him to place formal evidence before me stating why he should not go back to Russia; failing that our correspondent would go the following day back to Russia if he chose to, and if any disagreeable incidents happened, I would publish the whole truth about this attempt to bring pressure, without disclosing the facts, on a British editor in London. I said I would refuse to listen to any allegations of any kind against any member of my staff unless they were substantiated and put in writing. The Russian emissary threw up his hands in a gesture of despair. He said he was sorry his friendly mission had failed. He would accept no further responsibility. I am afraid I hustled him out rather quickly. I then sent for our correspondent and told him in detail what had happened. He left for Russia next day, as arranged, and I heard no more of the matter.

Monday, February 6th 1933. Esmond Harmsworth asked me to spend the week-end at his place in Kent, Mereworth Castle. Went down by 6.15 train on Saturday from Charing Cross to Tonbridge, where a Rolls-Royce met us for the rest of the journey. A young chap named Pakenham was on the train on the same mission as myself. Said he was an economics tutor at Christ Church and did leaders for the *Mail* two days a week as help to H. W. Wilson. In the car on the way to the castle he admitted he was one of the few economists who believed in tariffs. It was dark when we reached Mereworth. The castle was built in 1720 and is said to be in the style of Malcontenta, the famous Italian villa near Venice. It's like going into St. Paul's. You walk up about a hundred wide stone steps to a tiny oak door, passing through which you find yourself in a vast domed central hall of stone. You climb a narrow circular stairway to a sort of whispering gallery from which corridors lead to the sleeping rooms. So many doors you get quite puzzled. Our names were written on cards and put in slots on the doors. A notice on the bedroom window read: 'In case of fire open

window and throw out chute.' This was of canvas, rolled up and lying handy. Reminded me of the fire-escape ropes in Tasmanian country hotels. The long gallery, where we sat and talked after dinner, reminded me with its gorgeous paintings, dating back to 1720, of the inside of some old Moscow churches. The castle was luxurious and most comfortable inside. Such staff efficiency too! Butlers and valets who knew your name before the car had pulled up. Having a valet's a great ordeal to us common folk—you wonder what he thinks of your underclothing and your Woolworth studs; and when all your clothes disappear to be pressed you feel you daren't ask for them back—looks so unsophisticated; but it takes a great effort to get the right degree of nonchalance—not to ring the bell when your gold cigarette-case has gone from your pocket. With great restraint you refrain from packing up your own things on coming away—with great apprehension too. Gave my valet a pound, which young Gordon Selfridge (also in the party) did as 'about the right thing, old man'. Esmond is a pleasant host. One always finds men at their best on these occasions. He was extraordinarily human and homely and a topping talker on all subjects. We talked a lot about Northcliffe, and the *Mail*, and economics and trade. St. John Harmsworth was there too, Northcliffe's favourite brother and the most like him in temperament and appearance. I found my eye wandering to him all the time. He is unable to walk because of a bad motor smash years ago and is wheeled about in a chair. But he is great company. They talked of a real big biography of Northcliffe. Who could do it? I suggested Winston Churchill. St. John asked about Garvin. I said he would drown Northcliffe's personality in words. Esmond is thirty-five, two years younger than the paper of which he is now Chairman. He asked me candid questions about the *Mail*. On the world outlook at the moment I thought he was pessimistic, though he declined to accept that word. He saw the ultimate passing of the present order (St. John even hinted that the Russian experiment might be nearer the coming order than many of us believed).

'But what matter?' said Esmond, looking hard at me. 'Don't *you* want to live in exciting times? I believe we are alive at the most interesting period of world history. After all life is short. What is it? Just a flash and then we are nobody and forgotten. It's great to be alive when there's some change and excitement afoot. . . . What's that? Yes, of course, all this luxury might have to go. Everything will be simpler—standards of living lower and simpler; but it'll be the same for all. Why worry? No, no, *I'm* not pessimistic. I'm just interested and thrilled at watching the whole world changing before my eyes.' I rather liked him for all that.

We talked of dictators. We mentioned Churchill and Lloyd George and Rothermere (Esmond's father) and Beaverbrook and Ashfield. 'None of 'em any good,' was the general verdict. 'Too old; they wouldn't be ruthless enough.' Mosley was mentioned as a possible—a great speaker who knew what he wanted and would be ruthless about it. The talk was tonic. I could have enjoyed more of it. But Esmond was as keen to play bridge as to talk. Young Gordon Selfridge and I stood out. Why play bridge when we could sharpen our brains with clashing discussion? We talked about Selfridge's work in the 'rag trade'. He's one of the new practical-cum-academic type, is thirty-five, and a bachelor, with flying as his relaxation. He is spreading his other wings—his business wings that is—under the patriarchal guidance of his famous father. Despite Winchester and Cambridge he found himself 'going through the mill' in his father's business at twenty-one. He spent his holidays for the next four years in respectively a bank, an accountant's office, a building firm, and an advertisement office, and at twenty-four was managing twelve branches. He is a lucid talker and likes his job because 'it is so practical; and anyhow is the only thing I know anything about'. We talked about the development of radio and I reminded him of the first *Daily Mail* wireless broadcast concert from Holland in July 1922, in the organization of which I took part. We had boomed the thing all over the land, asking the rapidly growing army of wireless amateurs to listen in and report

results to us. We had advised the ordinary public to go and listen to the loud-speakers which had been fitted up in the big stores, including Selfridge's. The results in London were poor. Reports came in to our office which made us feel we had struck a 'flop'. The only bright spot was Selfridge's, whence people telephoned us that the reception was marvellous.

'Yes,' laughed young Gordon, 'I can explain that. I was twenty-one at that time and father had given me the run of the Oxford Street store to get used to the business, and when the show began and all I heard was a chorus of crackling noises I just put on a gramophone record.'

Wednesday, March 22nd 1933. Another case to-day of the fruit of early friendships—so valuable to a journalist. Years ago in Hong Kong I made a friend of R. F. Johnston (*Note:* Sir Reginald Johnston, died 1938), then Clerk of Council to the Government. I have kept in touch with him throughout the years, and have thereby pulled off several scoops concerning things Chinese and Oriental. He is now Sir Reginald Johnston, ex-His Excellency of Wei-hai-wei, ex-tutor to the boy ex-Emperor of China, and at the moment Professor of Chinese at the School of Oriental Studies and the leading English authority on Chinese affairs. The sister of the ex-Emperor is now staying at his house at Kew. Johnston lives there because he can see the pagoda in Kew Gardens and that reminds him every morning of his beloved China. She has had a baby—she and her husband are going under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Cheng—and to-day I was, thanks to Johnston, the only journalist permitted to be present at the naming ceremony. The baby princess was given the name 'Ying Ts'ai', meaning 'Flowerlike and Talented'. Johnston allowed me to write the story and we are the only paper in the world to have it. It's a 'woman's story' and therefore of very great newspaper value. . . . Dined at Savoy with Richard Burbidge (of Harrod's) and Jack Murdocke to-night. They seem to think no woman fashion writer in London knows her job. Well, I suppose they know. . . . At a reception at Layton's the other night met all sorts of economists from Sir Basil Blackett to

Sir Josiah Stamp. It was interesting to compare the two schools—Oxford and Cambridge. Layton (Cambridge) orthodox, cautious, and serene; Blackett (Oxford) more worldly, warmer, less rigid, with more psychology in his economics. . . . Went to Soviet Embassy reception to-night. Russian 'talkie' shown—a good bit of propaganda. Maisky, the Ambassador, is a likeable little chap, less diffident than his brilliant but rather cold and intellectual predecessor, Sokolnikoff. Met a lot of folk there who wagged their heads about the world situation generally—what with the American banking crash, and the capture of Germany by Hitler. It's the intransigent attitude of the French, backed by us, which has put Hitler where he is, and now he has got there, we are falling over ourselves to make him the concessions we stubbornly refused to make during Germany's former Liberal régimes of Stresemann and Bruning. Force and audacity count—also a man who knows what he wants and sets out to get it, unafraid to lose his life in the process This—and our long denial of equality to Germany—have made Hitler the dictator. MacDonald is now rushing about Europe seeing Mussolini in Italy and the French in Paris and the internationalists in Geneva, hoping to pull the chestnuts from the fire. France, in view of this new great European problem, may perhaps now toe the line and let the League of Nations really function. None of the nations has yet dared to disarm because the League has been so ineffective. Now, as others won't disarm, Germany means to arm. That Versailles Treaty, holding Germany in perpetual bondage as a vanquished land in the interests of France, will have to be revised. That is surely the writing on the wall. Either that, or a throwing over of all the international stuff and a return to 'each for himself and the devil take the hindmost'. In which case I am all for the British Empire. And in which case, also, Beaverbrook wins the rubber.

April 27th 1933. Dined with Charles Graves and his attractive wife. Warwick Deeping and his wife there. Lot of talk about occult things. Deeping said he was 'four books ahead' with his novels; that he did not claim

to be a literary man, but he knew a story and how to tell it and he made his living that way and liked it, and that was all there was to it. Gilbert Frankau says the same thing.

Thursday, May 4th 1933. Cummings' articles from Moscow suggest he is somewhat disillusioned about life under the Soviet. He would not care to be a Soviet citizen; he sees little liberty; thinks our bottom dogs are better off after all, and that class distinctions exist almost as much there as here. This won't be popular stuff among my Russian Embassy friends who were so keen for Cummings to go to Russia.

Friday, May 5th 1933. Amusing instance of prepared Royal 'asides' at the Coming-of-Age Festival of the National Advertising Benevolent Society at Guildhall to-night. The toast of the evening was given by H.R.H. Prince Arthur of Connaught. The papers were supplied with an advance printed copy of the Royal speech, in which was the following paragraph. It tells its own story—my italics:

'I think the newspaper publishers are far-seeing people to have reinforced the news-interest of their columns by the adventitious aid to "reader interest" which the advertising columns yield. (*Slily*) I am not sure, indeed, that our newspaper publishers ought not to feel a certain degree of embarrassment in allowing advertisers to pay for advertisements which are so considerable a joy to the reader as well as a source of revenue to the publisher. (*Turning to Sir Gomer Berry, or any newspaper owner, as though by afterthought*) That's SHELL—that was! Almost—bomb-SHELL!'

As my diary entries show the shadow of Hitler was creeping with sinister portent over the face of Germany. The evil spirits of Fear and Enmity were abroad in Europe as the militant dictatorships ascended the horizon. If Russia and its interpretation were a problem for a Liberal editor, Germany looked like being a worse one. I had felt it a duty upon me to visit Germany on several occasions to learn for

myself what was happening. I was no stranger there. I had known Germany as a young man in pre-War days. I had known the feeling of security and comfort on crossing the frontier from Russia into a country with a standard of life and culture nearer to our own. The War had bruised things a lot, including friendships in Hamburg, Berlin, and other places; but I still could not believe that the land of Heine and Luther, of Wagner and Mendelssohn, of Haeckel and Schopenhauer, could remain for ever the outcast of civilization.

I went to Germany and talked with people like Theodore Wolff, of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, with university professors and with foreign office officials. I went among the students in Berlin. I did the same in Heidelberg and also rooted out local newspaper editors and talked with them. I went on to Geneva to see how Germany stood there. I talked with M. Thomas in the International Labour Office and listened to his grave words, 'We have ten years in which to organize the world for Peace. After then it will be too late.' I stayed in the homes of Rhineland vinegrowers and heard their prayers to Heaven that the Fatherland might again be given a respected place among the nations. I came back to London each time feeling that few people in Britain seriously tried to understand what was happening in Germany, or, if they knew, cared to tell the facts. Each time for my pains I was laughed at and told I was seeing things under the bed. Yet it seemed plain as a pikestaff that a clever and inspired crusader of the name of Hitler was providing a pipe-line for a new liberty-seeking emotion of the German people, especially the young people, and that he would be on top before we were much older, with a nation regimented to his will. I was told by Liberal pundits, sceptical of my efficiency as an observer or judge of affairs outside the parochial limits of Fleet Street, that Hitler was just a brainless lunatic ('look at his idiotic moustache'), that any competent observer could see he had the intellectual equipment of the house-painter he was; and that he would soon disappear when he tried anything on. I offered to bet any of my colleagues in Bouverie Street a box of Coronas that Hitler would be boss in Germany after the elections, and would ultimately

replace Capitalistic Democracy with some other system. They returned tolerant smiles at me, the international amateur; and when my election prediction came true they said, 'but of course, the elections were rigged'.

'But who had the power to rig them?' I demanded. 'You can only rig the ballot-box if you've got unchallengeable power, and if you've managed to get that unchallengeable power, you can't be the half-baked nitwit you say Hitler is.'

What I felt then, and what I feel now, is that the foreign newspapermen in Berlin, not altogether without indifference from their superiors at home, failed from the start to interpret Hitler—failed to see him emerging as a leader of a new revolutionary crusade. For long they pooh-poohed him as a man of no account. Up to the moment of his first triumph they presented him wrongly and contemptuously to the British public, rather in the light of a nuisance that could not possibly last. Some of the fierce antagonism in their later dispatches from Germany was, I feel, the measure of their annoyance at a triumph they had ceaselessly predicted would be a failure. It is perhaps unfair to be too hard on them. They, like many of us, had been misled by such ghosts of Germany's lost Liberalism as Dr. Brüning. They also had some regard for the old Germany. They could not believe that the country of Luther would allow the breaking-up of religion; that the country of Heine and Einstein would allow the awful savaging of the Jews; that the country of Wolff and other famous journalists would allow the destruction of Press freedom; that the home of social and industrial reform would harbour the destroyers of Trade Unionism; that the fountain of European Socialist democracy would be poisoned with ruthless dictatorship. Yet those were the facts—and the man who brought them about was the man they had ridiculed or treated with sneering indifference for years—Hitler. Let it be plain that I abhorred the ideology for which Hitler stood. That is not the point. An editor's duty is to report men and events accurately and objectively and without conscious bias. Facts are sacred—or should be—to the newspaperman. The facts about Hitler's ascendancy in Germany were presented in misguided form here for years by an annoyed Press. We

are paying for it to-day. I do not think our diplomats were any better than our Press. After the dismissal of Chancellor Brüning and Liberalism vanished entirely from the German scene, I remember occasions when certain papers, our own included, were looked upon with official disfavour and labelled 'pro-German' because we tried to state and explain fairly the Nazi's claims in matters of arms equality and so on. I suppose France was calling the tune for Downing Street because she could not bear to think we could see any moral right on Germany's side. The British policy undoubtedly was to bring France and Germany together as the first condition of a peaceful Europe, but it was a hard job when France was so susceptible of the slightest hint of concession to Nazi Germany, or so petulant because Hitler, like it or not, had in fact arrived.

It would, perhaps, have been more than human for Liberal journalists to be pure-white objective in reporting the advance of the Nazi's ferocious anti-Liberalism; but however unpalatable it may have been to report the success of these onslaughts and admit that Hitler was 'getting away with it' (and unpalatable it assuredly was), it would to my mind have been a dereliction of newspaper duty to minimize the facts. That was where I felt I was not altogether in 'spiritual unity' with some of my superiors in Bouverie Street. I felt they mistook my striving for objectivity to be dangerously near approval of Hitler. Nothing could have been farther from the truth—but I did want this country to understand him instead of merely abusing him. I did want to let our readers visualize Germany as the new young Germans did, not merely as the battered and disappointed international Liberals saw it. I did not improve matters, I suppose, when, disgusted at the petty schisms and personalities that had paralysed British Liberalism, I often declared that it could do with a dash of discipline itself, and that if we were to save our democracy and economic stability one way might be through a kind of 'disciplined Liberalism', which would mean sacrifices, not only by Capitalism but also by Labour—sacrifice, for instance, of this dreadful committee system which caused us only to talk while the dictators kicked us in the pants—sacrifice, maybe, of some

of the structure of our capitalistic system. I smile now at my fervour in those days when, for the nonce, the journalist who had never wanted to mess about with political theories was driven by circumstances to do so. I only burnt my fingers. I chafed at the arrogant complacency of university minds who saw me, I felt, as nothing but a vulgar little realist lacking the intellectual equipment to master such problems; one of whom they seemed to be saying, like Job: 'Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?'

I have dealt with this problem of Germany at some length as a prelude to entries in my diary showing Lady Oxford, Lloyd George, and Lord Snowden in relation to the changing German scene. I would make clear, if it has not already been made clear, that, although Germany's form of government is Germany's own business, it is not a form that I, or anybody else who stands for a liberal civilization, could willingly accept. I would don my uniform again if threatened with the loss of individual freedom which the German people have suffered, or if racial and religious intolerance such as exist in Germany to-day were enforced upon this free land of ours.

In May 1933, the year he became Chancellor, Hitler sent Dr. Alfred Rosenberg to London to unmask British opinion about Germany—and to inform our 'higher-ups' about that country and put it and its new leader in good complexion. Much mystery was made of his visit. He successfully evaded the Press. Scores of journalists hunted 'Hitler's mystery man' all over the town, but always came back without his scalp. Then, like a bolt from the blue, came Lady Oxford on the warpath:

> *Tuesday, May 9th 1933.* Lady Oxford rang me yesterday and said that instead of the article she had intended doing for me she would write 1,000 words about Dr. Rosenberg. I told her I hoped she did not want to write praiseful propaganda about this man who was behaving in such secrecy. 'Nothing of the kind' was the reply. 'He has been to see me and I have given him a very straight talk. I will tell in my article what I have told him, and I will

write 1,000 words for 50 guineas. In view of its importance compared with the other article I had intended to write, it is worth 50 guineas.' I said at once, 'Certainly'. So last night she sent me one of the most astounding interviews I have ever published—brilliantly done. I count it as one of my great scoops. As I was reading it she 'phoned to say there were 1,700 words and it was therefore much too long but I could cut it as I liked. I said I would print every word of it, and I congratulated her on an outstanding piece of work which would have a great international repercussion. She rubs Hitlerism in the mud with a vengeance, puts poor old Rosenberg at bay, and trounces him mercilessly. Can't help feeling he's an ass to let Margot get away with it like this. Her name will be mud at the Embassy and in Germany after this. Still, that's her affair.

Lady Oxford's Rosenberg interview caused the sensation I had anticipated. We 'splashed' it under the heading, 'Lady Oxford Meets The Mystery Man'. Her bitter phrases about 'Jew-baiting', 'Has Hitler no God?' 'No two opinions upon the cruelties and follies' in Germany, 'a one-man show', together with Rosenberg's surprised replies, sung their way on cables and wireless to the Press of the world. Newspapers in the United States, South Africa, and other countries cabled for permission to reproduce the interview in full. In Germany the muzzled Press chorused an inspired attack on Lady Oxford for her 'blazing indiscretion' in reporting what they said was a private talk after she had invited Rosenberg to come and see her. She sent me a message on that point, regretting if she had caused him any embarrassment, but she had understood both he and she were expressing opinions which they desired every one should know. She also wrote:

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1,
May 10th 1933

Dear Mr. Clarke,

You, and your paper have scored off all the other papers, and my article has brought me in masses of letters and telephone messages of congratulation from very different,

and some most important political men—they do not want their names brought in. I met Mr. Spender at the Reform Club this morning and several members came up and congratulated me. Mr. Spender told me neither Mr. Baldwin nor the Prime Minister, nor Sir John Simon, would have spoken out in the way I have.

It was not difficult for me as I am never in the least afraid of any one (perhaps wrongly!) and I feel passionately upon the German situation.

Are we back in the years 1914, 1915, and 1916? If my husband were alive the Liberal Party would be a different affair I can assure you (I hope I am not hurting your belief in Mr. Lloyd George as our future Prime Minister). If you were to come out boldly, instead of playing about, you would be as great an influence as the *Manchester Guardian* was in former days.

I would like to write you an article upon the present European situation, and Geneva.

Yours,
MARGOT OXFORD

I telephoned acceptance of the article suggested and she asked me to set down any points I had in mind. I told her I thought she might make her article a broad survey of the parlous state of Liberalism the world over and that she, as wife of a great Liberal Prime Minister, should point the moral. She mentioned our paper's often expressed opinion that the Liberals ought to cross the floor of the House of Commons, an opinion she did not share, as the party had 'only one shot to fire and it should not be fired to no purpose'. I wasn't very clear what she meant, but I replied that the Liberal Party as it was then was incapacitated from firing any shot at all and was merely conducting a mock battle. Moral courage was needed there, as elsewhere. She spoke of Cummings and criticized him hotly for something he had written about a Rosenberg Press reception. She felt the article was rude to 'that very important and charming young man' Bismarck, who was really a big man and grandson of the great Bismarck. I said she couldn't expect that to impress Cummings.

'How old is this Mr. Cummings?' she snapped.

'I would guess about forty-eight,' I said. 'Don't you know him? He is also important and charming.'

'You astonish me,' she replied. 'I thought he was just some silly young man you were turning loose.'

'You would not say that if you met him.'

'Now I am going to have my bath,' she said, 'and then go to the Opera. Send those notes you are doing soon, as I am leaving London at 8.30 in the morning. Say what you like. . . . I do not mind how rubbishy. . . .'

Rosenberg beat it back to Berlin that same evening. I think Lady Oxford can well claim she torpedoed him. Having done so she sharpened her rapier for others.

44, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.1,
May 18th 1933

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I will write 1,000 words for you for 35 guineas as arranged but am waiting to see how things develop when Ramsay returns, but if you prefer my article soon, you have only to telephone to me. I shall be very frank and indiscreet!—for though I do not want to join your hero—Lloyd George and Labour, and cross the floor of the House, I think the Government's apathy is deplorable. You do not see as many young Tory M.P.s as I do, and one and all tell me they take in your paper entirely to read 'Notes of the Day', but now that Spender has ceased writing them they are not so good. Why don't you make him write oftener? If you are giving him up, I shall certainly cease taking your paper in, as under violent Liberal and Free Trade convictions he has the moderation to attract men of other opinions, and my husband always said he was the greatest of Liberal journalists. 'All the great journalists of our time have been Liberals' is what G. Dawson of *The Times* said to me the other day; but we make no use of them.

Yours haste,
MARGOT OXFORD

44, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.1,
May 20th 1933

DEAR MR. CLARKE,

I can't read any more letters on my articles about Rosenberg though I thank you for sending them to me. If you want them back let my secretary know. I get more letters than I can open over these articles, and several rich Jews have said they would now take in your paper as they hoped I was going to write regularly for it. I did not answer these letters as I am hard at work on my new book and have no time to answer strangers.

Yours,
MARGOT OXFORD

Monday, May 15th 1933. Lunched at the Savoy Grill with Charles Morrison, editor Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, just back from Germany. Something had happened to his nose, which bled freely as he told me about the growing militarism of Germany. Manetti looked shocked at such a thing happening in the Savoy Grill.

The rapidly expanding truculence on the part of Germany caused many of us with, I hope, realistic outlook to harden. We looked like having to yield to Force things that had been denied to Argument. Even if we had not been altogether faultless in our treatment of Germany, her brutal return to Force, and her leader's declared delight in fighting, made complacent trust impossible. Lloyd George in May, in a sort of 'fair play for Germany' speech, had said that the Allies had provoked Germany to anger and militarism because they themselves had not disarmed. About the same time Roosevelt was appealing to the heads of all the Powers asking for a conference to preserve peace. We in Bouverie Street thought Roosevelt's was a statesmanlike effort and Lloyd George's, in the circumstances, a mischievous one which would encourage Hitler's 'religion of Force'. So our paper rapped Lloyd George on the knuckles, and implied in so many words that if it had to be Force—well, then, Force had better be met by Force. If Germany were going to start up another armaments race—well, better be firm,

if unpleasant about it—and at once. Our forthrightness brought down on my poor head the wrath of Lord Snowden. He said our 'deplorable' leader had caused him to write his first letter to an editor about any subject in his journal:

'I see,' he wrote, 'you have had a number of protests about it, and there must be thousands who, like myself extremely regret it, who have not written to you. No article since the War has distressed me so much. It was written in the best Hitler vein, and in the most approved jingo flamboyancy. It was totally unbalanced, and took not the least account of the causes of the present terrible state of things in Germany. This state of things is heart-breaking to those of us who for the last fourteen years have been working to encourage a new Germany, and the efforts of Germans like Dr. Stresemann to promote peaceful relations with the rest of Europe.

'For fourteen years the Allies have been building up their military strength, and to-day are all far more powerfully armed than they were before the War. They have denied to Germany reasonable concessions in violation of their own specific pledges.

'The Germans were always incredible fools in tact and diplomacy, and they are now playing into the hands of France and her satellites. The placing the responsibility on Germany for the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference—which would have been in any case after MacDonald's maladroit handling of the Mussolini Pact—is attributed by you and indeed by all the British Press to the present attitude of Germany at the Conference. France and the Little Entente are holding back and letting Germany bear the responsibility for the breakdown of the Conference, and the Germans are such fools as not to see the game that France and the Little Entente are playing.

'It is true that the present Hitlerism in Germany has alienated unthinking public opinion in this country, with an ignorant repercussion in favour of France. At the same time Hitler and Von Papen have made it almost impossible for those who are still friends of the best elements among the German people to act or speak on the subject.

Pardon the outspokenness of this letter. I hope you will not be offended by my frankness.

(*Signed*) SNOWDEN

I replied:

'I am in no way offended by your frankness. I value it. And I know you will not think that the leader you deplore was inspired by anything but a desire to prevent war and the restart of an armaments race. The points you raise were not out of our minds when we took the line we did—the danger of playing into the hands of people who are against disarmament both here and across the Channel. But on the whole the Germans' blatant proclamation of Force as their god (as in 1914) made it necessary, so it seemed to us, to face squarely this question: What are we going to do if Germany means it and starts to re-arm? A firm word in season has worked wonders before, as you yourself have proved in practice. We here have to realize what manner of people are now in the saddle in Germany. Perhaps what we have said may assist a quicker re-emergence of people like Stresemann and Bruning to squelch this present German folly. But I don't think that will happen if we yield to Hitler and Co.'

Lady Oxford's rapier was still ever ready for Lloyd George. Her final communications before the end of my editorship all harped on my wrong-headedness in 'running Lloyd George'. She rang me up one day and asked if I would go to see her in Bedford Square. I could not do so because of the death of my attached friend 'Quex' (Captain G. F. Nichols) the writer of our gossip column. She then said she wanted soon to talk with me about J. A. Spender. She was concerned about how little prominence he got in the paper day by day as compared with 'the Lloyd George admirers'. We had introduced a daily feature in the first column of our front page. It was called 'Notes of the Day'. It was reserved for the writings of a small panel of experts saying exactly what they liked about politics and affairs from their individual point of view. Spender wrote these

notes two or three times a week, but I think Lady Oxford felt he ought to possess the column every day. There was undoubtedly a strong undercurrent against Spender in certain Bouverie Street quarters, and Lady Oxford must have known of this. What she did not appear to know was that I was always taking up the cudgels in Spender's behalf against those who seemed to desire to undermine him, and it was only through insistence on my part that he was secured a fairly regular platform in 'Notes of the Day'. Spender represented an important section of Liberal thought and was a figure of international renown whom we could not afford to keep out of our pages even had we desired to do so—which I certainly did not. However, Lady Oxford got it into her head that the anti-Lloyd Georgeites were threatened with the muzzling of one of their chief spokesmen. I reassured her that was not so and suggested I should come to see her another day. She wrote me two letters after this, one at 2 o'clock in the morning.

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1
26 May 33

Dear Mr. Clarke,

I will have to see you another time as I must go to the flower show. It was only to tell you not to chuck Alfred Spender—I see he writes now and then but not in his usual place and fitfully. He has to sell his lovely place and has never been rewarded for his marvellous services to the Liberal Party. Rumour has gone round that he is leaving you, so my friends say they are giving up your paper (which I shall also do). I tell them it is quite untrue.

Yrs
Margot Oxford

44, Bedford Square, W.C.1.
28 May 33

2 a.m.

Dear Mr. Clarke,

All my friends read 'Notes of the Day' and seldom turn over the pages of your paper. They don't approve

of your running Ll. G., and wanting H. Samuel to join Ll. G. and Labour by crossing the floor of the House. Long views, and much patience are needed to-day. If Spender never writes in 'Notes of the Day' he will not be read at all, and much as I like Walter Layton, he has only one subject, and is not very forceful. With the coming Conference (*Note:* World Economic Conference in London) he knows his subject, but not his readers, and Spender knows every one, and above all knows how boring 'economics' alone can be! I, for one (and Ld. d'Abernon said the same) will cease to take in the *News Chronicle* if Spender does not write 'Notes of the Day'. It is your one great feature, and you should concentrate on them.

I get letters from every part of the world on my two Rosenberg articles—I'm glad I gave you a 'scoop' as you have always been kind to me.

Yrs
MARGOT OXFORD

I replied to Lady Oxford:

'I enjoy your frank letters and appreciate your point of view, but you must have some rather tiresome friends. I mean those you mention who put about these absurd rumours concerning Spender and others. If these friends choose to give up our paper because of something which is not true—as they would discover if they *read* the paper instead of ignorantly *talking* about it—well, I'm sorry, but I cannot help it. We shall survive the threat. I wonder if they describe themselves as Liberals. I wonder if they know anything about the millions of readers an editor has to try to serve. Or do they merely live for musty Party politics? As a journalist I can't do that. I am no politician or propagandist. My job is to produce a newspaper, with politics as part of the news, and, I hope, a liberal interpretation of it. And when your friends say these petty things about our paper (and doubtless about its readers) and cause you to repeat them to me, I can only feel regretful at their lack of Liberalism and that a shining Liberal like you should be used as their vehicle.'

CHAPTER XVIII

Lloyd George and Lord Riddell—A Post-War 'Rift'—Lord Snowden Looks Back—Rothermere Inspects Me—Lloyd George and a Date in 1916—What Cyril Asquith Wanted to Know.

June 8th 1933. Talked to Lord Riddell about his *War Diary* published to-day. It's a living picture of Lloyd George in war-time. I told Riddell I had not known he was during the War such an intimate friend of Lloyd George and all these other people. It must have cost him a packet entertaining them at Walton Heath. He said: 'I was very close to Lloyd George and a lot of others. I have not quarrelled with Lloyd George—but those make the best journalists when actively associated with the direction of a newspaper and its policy who are able to hold themselves remote from political or social entanglements. These cramp one's freedom. I have found it so often.'

So that's the reason Riddell and Lloyd George cooled off. Further observations made by Riddell confirmed what I had heard elsewhere, that their rift started with the Versailles Peace Conference. Riddell, who during the War had been acting as liaison officer between the Government and the Press, went to the Peace Conference against the wishes of Northcliffe, the latter having quarrelled with Lloyd George and what he called the 'Old Gang'. Northcliffe felt that Riddell, who was then accepted as representing *all* the Press as Chairman of the Newspaper Proprietor's Association, was being used as a propaganda vehicle for Lloyd George's policies. So he made it plain that Riddell must not assume that he any longer represented the influential and large-sale newspapers that Northcliffe controlled, from *The Times* to the *Daily Mail*. This put Riddell in a quandary. He had to make up his mind whether his loyalties lay with the Press or with Lloyd George. He was a newspaperman first. He took his duties at the Newspaper Proprietor's Association very seriously. He saw himself in a queer position if Northcliffe repudiated him. Of the two men Northcliffe meant

more to him than Lloyd George. So Northcliffe won. Riddell attended a few more of the conferences that followed Versailles, and then he faded out of the picture, holding himself 'remote from political or social entanglements', and I suppose Lloyd George did not altogether relish this or the reason for it.

Friday, June 9th 1933. At Jack Hylton's cocktail party met Anthony Asquith, who is making a career of film producing. Says he is enjoying it all immensely and would not change his job for worlds. I said: 'Twenty years ago a man of your position and upbringing would have laughed that sort of job to scorn as something "not quite done". . . . How times have changed!'

'Yes,' he replied, 'I am glad I was born when I was.'

'Write me an article under that heading,' I requested. 'I will pay you, of course, but not as much as I pay your mother.'

'I would like to write for you,' he said, 'but under that heading it would be too personal.' I told him that was nonsense and merely the resurgence of effete tradition. He said he would think it over. (*Note:* He did not write the article.)

Tuesday, June 13th 1933. To the Austrian Legation last night to meet the quaint little Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Engelbert Dolfuss, at a musical reception. He is so tiny (not five feet high) that he got lost in the crush. I told Sir John Reith, who is six foot four inches, that I would like to photograph him with Dolfuss as the 'long and the short of it'. Reith did not look very pleased. Reith talked to me of the future of broadcasting news. I said that one day the B.B.C. would own its daily newspaper and would tell millions of people the night before where to find all the news—without propaganda—next day.

'And are you staking the claim to be first editor?' he laughed.

'Why not?' I replied.

The Lord Mayor, Sir Percy Greenaway, told me that his City Company, the Stationers, had at last decided to join forces with our gang of Newspaper Makers, but that

I must say nothing in the Press about it. He spilled a mouthful about the great traditions of the City and the 'Companies' and seemed to me a bit sceptical whether we newspaper folk can live up to them. There had been some criticism of the Pressmen at their meeting to-day. He said he was surprised at it. Some of his pals thought there were some terrible specimens among the Fleet Street pundits. He said the Press was all-powerful, but it must not try to rule the City. When it abused its power then it lost it. With all of which I smilingly agreed and then went off to talk to Maisky, the Russian Ambassador, standing all alone, cold-shouldered it seemed by the diplomats of the 'respectable' nations. Maisky talked of the Moscow trial and Cummings articles. He liked them all, 'except two he wrote after leaving Moscow.' That's the worst of these Russians. They *are* so childish about criticism. I said he should not object to the honest criticism of a man like Cummings, but he shrugged his shoulders and smiled sadly. As I talked with Maisky's charming wife, I fancied the Lord Mayor of London looked at me. I hoped he didn't think my talking with a 'Red' justified those chaps who had told him some journalists were terrible specimens. Behind me sat my good friend Sir Harold Bellman, who tells me that building societies are in for a good time. . . . As I came away the linkman with his lamp scraped and bowed, saying, 'What fine parties they have—just like the old times. . . . I hope they'll have many more.' I gave him a two-shilling piece as the car drove off. He saluted, bowed, and scraped again and repeated his wishes for more 'wonderful parties' like this. I wonder! I went back to the office to put into shape the news of the World Economic Conference—and the American Debt—and the Nazi uproar in Vienna—and all the rest of the world's illnesses. The paper was full of 'em! Unemployment everywhere, dwindling trade everywhere.

Poor linkman! What a hope for the return of the glittering nights!

Tuesday, June 20th 1933. My reward for being comparatively nice to the Russians was an invitation to

luncheon at the Soviet Embassy to-day to meet M. Litvinoff, the Foreign Commissar from Moscow, who has come to represent Russia at the World Economic Conference. A rotund, merry-faced fellow, with blue eyes and no eyebrows. I sat next to him. He says Russia's policy is in the West. They are getting under from their Far Eastern burdens, where the Japs are reshaping things. Their railway across northern Manchuria has always been a bugbear. He is mistrustful of Germany. Told him that both he and Simon (our Foreign Secretary) were behaving like children in not seeing each other in London. He turned to talk to the man the other side of him.

Sunday, July 2nd 1933. Had luncheon and spent afternoon with Lord and Lady Snowden at their lovely place at Tilford, in Surrey. Never suspected years ago in Manchester when I listened to Philip Snowden's burning pioneering speeches for the Labour movement that I should one day be going to see him as a viscount. I felt I would rather be going to meet 'Philip Snowden'. The other seems to me such an anti-climax, but I suppose it had to be. Lady Snowden, writing to me of the route, had said their place was only five minutes from Lloyd George at Churt, and if I took 'the Lloyd George route' the way was so and so. In reply I said I would not take the Lloyd George route; I knew a better, but I explained later that that remark had no political significance. Philip was a frail figure, looking well enough in the face for a man of his years, but hobbling about painfully with two sticks or using a wheel chair. He wore a rakish Yorkshire cap which I am sure had not been bought in the south of England—the sort of cap you see at a jaunty angle on the heads of pit lads or factory workers in industrial Lancashire and Yorkshire. I thought of a title for an article, 'The Viscount in the Pit Lad's Cap'. His keen blue eyes had all their old searchingness. The heavy upper left lid fell over one eye now and then leaving only a crescent of the pupil showing. This gave Philip a sinister look in no sense justified. We sat awhile under a willow-tree in the scented garden and then went for lunch. Lady Snowden helped at table as there was a shortage of

domestic help. We had a Yorkshire Sunday 'dinner'—real Yorkshire pudding served with gravy as an introduction (two helpings insisted on)—then roast beef and a sweet. We drank lemonade. The Snowdens are teetotallers.

Early in the talk I asked Lord Snowden: 'Why did you take a title?'

'I have always believed in titles,' he rasped. I thought my question had angered him, but he allowed a smile to remove the challenge from his parchment face. His thin lips, which had tightened for a moment, relaxed, and he returned to broad Yorkshire and good humour.

'Are folks saying things about it?' he asked me.

I replied, 'Some people have said to me, "It looks as if Philip, after a life of straining endeavour for Socialism and the labouring masses had seen the futility of it all—and in his disappointment had become the complete cynic and had decided to show his contempt by going the whole hog and becoming a member of the Peerage".'

He looked at me a moment—hard—as if anger were returning; then that grand, wistful smile won through. 'I know,' he said, 'some of them say that, but it's not true.'

Lady Snowden joined it: 'It was the only way for Philip. He could not go on in the House of Commons and they wanted some of their crowd in the Lords.'

'Do you now believe in a second chamber?' I asked.

'Yes, I do,' he said. 'A place for revision of the hasty legislation from the overworked Commons. I don't think it need be a legislative chamber in the sense of initiating legislation.'

I did not pursue this particular matter further, but my impression was that Philip was now on the side of the wise old heads with time to apply their ripe experience to the thrusting legislation from down below. Except to ask if he were disappointed or liked the Lords. He said he went there feeling he would not like the change from the Commons, but he had come to feel happy and at home and to feel he was doing useful work.

'What,' I next asked, 'do you say to this question? As

the years advance and you look back over your strenuous crusading life, do you feel you become more or less radical, or conservative? In short, have all your sacrifices for the underdog been worth while? If you had to live over again, would it be the same?'

Again that tolerant smile. He pulled his cloth cap over his right eye and said, 'What you *do* find as you get older, and as you get responsibilities of office, is that there are more difficulties in the way of your ideals than you ever believed. You realize that many of the things you have shouted for simply can't be done. You realize you may have made promises that it is not possible, or not practicable, to carry out. To that extent I suppose it is true to say you become more conservative. We found that out when Labour first took office. I remember at one Cabinet meeting George Lansbury in his disappointment at our coming 'up against it' and having to turn down a part of our programme we had promised, saying, 'No government can live on broken promises. If we can't do these things let's say so." When we got behind the scenes in office we found real practical barriers to some of our schemes which we had never suspected.'

'So,' I said, 'the older you grow and get behind the scenes the more Tory you become.'

'It may look like that,' he replied, 'but it isn't so. Remember Gladstone, suffering the same sort of disappointing hold-ups. Read his famous speech. I forget the year, but what he said was to the effect that, despite all, the great social forces march on. That's true. You cannot stop the forward march of man to his better destiny.

'What of the future of capitalism?' I ventured.

'People,' he replied, 'talk of the capitalistic system without knowing what it means. They ask will it be overthrown? They don't realize that much of our organization to-day is Socialistic, with our Public Corporations, our Health systems, our education, our public trusts and boards and so on. Evolution is going on all the time. Don't forget that the communal life so often talked about is nothing new. Mankind was once completely communal and, in the cycle, must return to

something like it again. Capitalism, properly applied, may well remain part of it.'

He implied there was no tangible capitalist system, as such, to abolish; its methods of operation were being corrected and brought into step slowly and inevitably with the march of social and economic forces. We talked about Russia, and, remembering his recent smack at my 'jingo flamboyancy' *re* Hitlerism, I asked why he, so balanced a statesman, had joined the jingo chorus at the time of the trial of the British engineers in Moscow? Why had he published in the Beaverbrook Press a thunderous demand for their immediate release with apologies or a severance of diplomatic and trade relations? Lord Snowden, I must confess, looked rather sheepish. 'I thought it was all a frame-up,' he said, 'and I wrote that in indignation in the heat of the moment. I have read the trial in full. It was surprisingly fair.' I let the subject go at that. I am still unable to guess why he barked so violently up the wrong tree. I asked him to tell me about the formation of the National Government in 1931. He spoke bitterly about Ramsay MacDonald, hissed like an otter about him, in fact. 'I was deceived,' he said, and his heavy eyelid dropped. As for the future he saw a probable coalescing of the progressive forces of Liberals and Labour, but 'there will always be the rebels barking at them.' To that extent he thought the two-party (main parties) system would probably return, but 'one can never say in this changing world—but one thing is certain: Labour will never have back renegades like MacDonald and Thomas. Mac is a Tory and has always been a social snob. . . .' He spoke well of Asquith and playfully recalled his fondness for the good things of life. For the time being the forces of reaction seemed to Philip to be in the ascendant. He talked of the World Economic Conference and said what was really wanted was 'freer trade; then all other problems will right themselves'. His work as Chancellor of the Exchequer had been the most interesting part of his career, and he said that 'Income Taxes and Death Duties are the only equitable taxation systems'.

Sunday, July 16th 1933. A few days ago the *Express* and the *Herald* announced they had reached their 2,000,000 sales daily. Beaverbrook got in first, but at the same time exposed the whole 'ballyhoo'—how he had spent as much as £30,000 a week on gifts and competitions and canvassing on readers whom he implied were not worth having for the advertiser. . . . In the meantime the World Economic Conference has faded away despite MacDonald's attempts to save it. Roosevelt flatly declined to have monetary stabilization discussed. MacDonald was nearly in tears. He has had his leg pulled by the Americans this time. Hitler in Germany announces that the German revolution is complete, and the *Daily Mail* appears to be polishing up its famous hat for an impending salute. Last Thursday was Beaverbrook's marvellous 'at home' at Stornaway House. Dancing, talking, a negro band, heaps of eatables, and rivers of champagne. Everybody there, including Prince George, whom Beaverbrook describes as the best of the lot of our princes. Miss Stevenson, Lloyd George's secretary, asked me if I would go to play golf with Lloyd George. She said she found things very quiet at Churt. Also, Tweed, another of Lloyd George's entourage, from whom I gathered that Lloyd George and Beaverbrook were seeing a lot of each other. Been asked to luncheon with Lord Rothermere on Tuesday at his flat in Stratton Street, Piccadilly. Wonder what's afoot. Wonder what Rothermere will be like. I've been reading a book to-day which says if you feel nervous in the presence of the great you should look 'em straight in the eye and imagine they have no clothes on. Must try that.

Tuesday, July 18th 1933. Met Rothermere for first time to-day. Lunched with him and his son and heir Esmond Harmsworth and his right-hand man Sir George Sutton. A good host, simple and unaffected, but lacking the glamour of his famous brother Northcliffe. Not so good-looking either with his burly build and prognathous jaw. Sure he wouldn't look very impressive with no clothes on. A great collector of pictures. At first there was nowhere for me to sit, as every chair in the room was occupied by

a picture, Rothermere striding round and examining them. Asked for my opinion of them—they were Italian oils—I said I was no judge (I didn't think very much as a matter of fact) as my attitude to art was purely emotional and inexpert. I asked what the pictures were worth. 'Four thousand pounds,' said Rothermere. At luncheon we had fish, roast beef and potatoes, stewed plums, cherries, cheese, a spot of whisky and cigars. The talk was mostly of newspapers; of war (Rothermere thought the next one would be between Britain and Japan), of India and the Ceylon Constitution (which Rothermere thought a folly); and of the late Sir John Ellerman who has just died. Rothermere said Ellerman was probably England's richest man, and had wanted to get *The Times* when Northcliffe died, so that he could go about the world as its owner. So Rothermere said to him, 'If you want *The Times*, buy it—you can have it if you are prepared to pay.' Rothermere had gone up to £1,400,000 'as far as I would go'. Astor, I gather, went higher, and Ellerman would not overbid him. As I came away with Esmond in his Rolls-Royce I had a feeling I had been under Rothermere's inspection—as years ago I had been under the inspection of Northcliffe in his house before he appointed me his News Editor.

The publication of Lloyd George's memoirs in the *Daily Telegraph* during the summer of 1933 had revived several war-time controversies, including one in which the Asquithians were particularly interested—that concerning the events of the critical week-end in December 1916 when Asquith was dethroned as Prime Minister and Lloyd George took his place as the 'organizer of victory'. The controversy was about Northcliffe and the part he had played, if any, behind the scenes. I was his news editor on the *Daily Mail* at the time. In my published diary I record under date Sunday, December 3rd 1916 (the day on which Asquith and Lloyd George met and supposedly came to terms about a reconstruction of the Government):

'The Chief (Lord Northcliffe) returned to town after

visiting his mother in the country and at seven o'clock he was at the War Office with Lloyd George.'

When next day in the *Daily Mail* (and also in *The Times*, which Northcliffe at that time controlled) there appeared articles putting a complexion on the position of Asquith different from what his friends had expected, the fat was in the fire, and it was insinuated that Lloyd George had inspired these articles, and their antagonism to Asquith, at the meeting he was supposed to have had with Northcliffe on the Sunday evening.

Lloyd George has always denied most explicitly that he saw Northcliffe that evening at the War Office or anywhere else, or communicated with him or *The Times* editor either directly or indirectly. In the *Telegraph* memoirs he again gave a repudiation of any such meeting, which the *Spectator* described as 'jejune'. It recalled my 1916 diary entry to illustrate the conflict of testimony. Lloyd George then wrote a letter to the *Spectator* saying:

> 'If Lord Northcliffe called at the War Office at 7 o'clock that (Sunday) evening I did not see him, as Mr. Bonar Law was with me from the moment I left Downing Street in his company until 8.30 p.m.'

He added that: 'The real facts have recently been published by Lord Beaverbrook, Tom Clarke, and others.' This puzzled the *Spectator* writer in view of the terms of my diary entry, but, expressing gratitude for Lloyd George's straightforward answer, he said, 'It now appears that though he (Northcliffe) may have been at the War Office, he was not with Lloyd George.'

I was not surprised when I received a letter from Mr. Cyril Asquith (*Note:* Now Mr. Justice Asquith) asking me—if I did not think it an unfair question—whether I was inclined to doubt the information on which my diary entry was based.

> 'It would,' wrote Mr. Asquith, 'be impossible to doubt it if Northcliffe on returning had said to you, "I've just

seen Lloyd George at the War Office." If, on the other hand, he said before starting out that he was going to the War Office with the object of seeing Lloyd George, you may very well have assumed that he fulfilled that object, although in fact he may have failed. There is ample corroboration of the fact that Northcliffe was at the War Office at the hour you mention . . . but was there an actual interview as you state?'

My reply to Mr. Asquith pointed out that according to my full diary entry there was no doubt that Northcliffe *told me* he was going to the War Office to see Lloyd George; nor was there any doubt that a member of the *Daily Mail* staff went to see Northcliffe later in the evening to get the material for his two-column article. I also pointed out that my actual diary entry was that at seven o'clock Northcliffe was 'still at the War Office with Lloyd George'. I continued:

'Seventeen years is a long memory test and I would not be so bold as to claim that I am able to recall with absolute certainty the detail of events and conversations on Sunday, December 3rd 1916 on which my diary entry that Northcliffe met L. G. at the War Office is based. Yet in a general way, my recollection is fairly clear and is supported by what I wrote at the time. As I point out in my book, there had been some signs of friction between Northcliffe and L. G. towards the end of 1916. On December 1st I saw Northcliffe at his house in St. James's Place. He had been complaining playfully, as he often did, that we at the *Daily Mail* office could not get the news and he would have to get it for himself. I remember he was rather excited and irritable that night. . . . He had not yet lifted the 'ban' on our political men seeing L. G. "until further notice", but his evening newspaper, the *Evening News*, on December 2nd did say that L. G. was rumoured to be packing up at the War Office. . . . By the following day, Sunday, December 3rd, it was clear to us that the "rifts" with L. G. were passing—at least as far as Northcliffe was concerned, and that the "red carpets" and trumpeters were being prepared for L. G.'s

return to favour. We wondered what pronouncement from the Chief the day would bring forth, and were impatient to get it in time for our early editions. That impatience is revealed in the use of the words "still at the War Office with Lloyd George". The phrase also reveals that I had been told earlier that evening where Northcliffe was and for what purpose. Who told me that? I have no doubt it was Northcliffe himself in one of his frequent telephone messages. I have a faint recollection of one from him instructing me to see that our political correspondent went to see him that night. That was to get the material for the two-column write-up, which was published the following day in the *Daily Mail*. I know nothing of any article that appeared in *The Times*. I remember our political correspondent was getting worried as the evening advanced because he had not got his story from the Chief, and the phrase I use in my diary "*still* at the War Office with Lloyd George" evidently has some relation to inquiries both he and I made as to when Northcliffe was likely to be available.

'To sum up. There is no doubt that Lord Northcliffe was at the War Office on the evening of December 3rd. There is no doubt that Lloyd George was there too. There is no doubt in my mind that Northcliffe in one or more of his communications with the office that day gave me and others to understand that he was seeing Lloyd George at the War Office. I never asked him about it afterwards because I never doubted it. I was not at the War Office to see for myself. To that extent I am dependent on what I still believe Northcliffe told me. He is not here to say whether he misled me. Lord Beaverbrook has recorded in his *Politicians and The War* that "When it began to be hinted abroad that it was this article (in *The Times*) which had provoked the crisis, Northcliffe, to use an expression of the theatrical world, 'took the curtain'." As I have said, I know nothing about any *Times* article. It is true, as I think my book reveals, that Northcliffe took exuberant pride in his power behind the scenes. He revelled in it, and if he let it be known that he was at the War Office, as he undoubtedly did, he

would not let you suppose that he was there to see anybody less than Lloyd George. There is no doubt that immediately after Sunday, as the hitherto unpublished entries in my diary show, the Northcliffe and Lloyd George organizations were in close touch again.'

With all this going on I was not surprised to hear from Lloyd George, whom I had not seen for some time. He asked me to luncheon at Churt. The first thing he spoke about was this 1916 episode, and he was very frank, as my diary record shows:

Friday, July 21st 1933. I found Lloyd George this morning in his sun-shelter, at Churt, looking the very picture of health. As we sat there he talked of the controversy whether he saw and talked to Northcliffe on December 3rd 1916. He said he had seen Northcliffe on the Friday (and, I think, he said on the Saturday, too), but NOT on the fateful Sunday. It was possible Northcliffe came to the War Office to see him. In fact he had an idea that that was so and that what happened was this: Lloyd George was with Bonar Law in close consultation and a note was brought in that Northcliffe had arrived. He showed it to Bonar Law and said, 'What about that?' Lloyd George decided not to see him. The point was (so Lloyd George told me) that the agreement with Asquith was fixed. Asquith and he and everybody were pleased about it, and he felt that to tell Northcliffe about it might mess things up. So he decided not to let him into the secret. 'I had had enough rows with him, and I did not want this plan spoiling. As you know, it left the "old man" (Asquith) as Prime Minister. . . . Northcliffe was wrong when he told you he had been with me that day. I sent word that I could not see him when they told me he was waiting for me.' In reply to all this I explained that I had no desire to be drawn into controversy on the matter. I only knew that Northcliffe, by what he said to us, gave us the impression at the time that he had been 'getting the news' from Lloyd George at the War Office, and that the article in the *Daily Mail*

on the following Monday was written by him (Northcliffe)—or rather inspired by him since he dictated the outline of it to the man who wrote it, in the sense of holding the pen. It was this article, and a similar one in *The Times* that set Asquith and his supporters in high dudgeon again. I said to Lloyd George that I wondered what all the bother was about except for the minor question of historical accuracy. 'All the world knows,' I said, 'that you were anxious to get Asquith out of the road. We know you liked him personally, but this was a war which had to be won and you thought, and most folk agreed with you, that he was the wrong man to win the War.'

Lloyd George. Yes—he was considered a hindrance to success.

Me. Well, what's all the fuss about? Asquith was wanted out and he was got out. It changed the direction of the War. Why not say so and be proud of it? Why all this discussion now about how he was got out?

He looked at me a little reprovingly, I thought, and said quietly, 'Let's go in to lunch. Finish your lager and come this way.' The subject was not mentioned again.

Sir Arthur Salter, the economist and League of Nations expert, had joined us for lunch, which opened with soup and a text-book-like statement by Salter about the economic depression. I said: 'I have ceased reading anything about the world depression or the World Conference, because the more I read and the more attention I pay to all the conflicting experts, the more confused I become.'

Lloyd George. Well, you should do with experts what I did. Put 'em in a room and let them talk away and present a report and then go your own way, using your own judgment.

Me. Precisely (with a wicked smile at genial Sir Arthur), after three years of their nightmares of crisis I am bemused. So is the public. No one now is paying any attention. The trouble is with so many of us that we may know our subject, but not our public.

Lloyd George. Oh, but politicians know something of the public.

Me. Journalists too. I only made a comprehensive statement out of politeness to Sir Arthur.

Salter smiled and argued that economics was not an exact science and that the irruption of unforeseen factors was likely often to upset predictions.

Me. That's my point. Economists can't be sure of all the factors, yet they pontificate as if they were. Look at all the things that were going to happen when we went off the gold standard; or when we paid the American debt; or look at the disaster that was going to follow the failure of the World Conference. Well, it has failed. What next?

Salter did not put up the fight I expected. Perhaps he thought I wasn't big enough guns. Maybe he's right.

Lloyd George said something about the beauty and idealism of looking ahead fifty years, but said the statesman had to think of the next five. I said the journalist had to be even more realistic and think, not of the next five years, but the next five minutes.

Lloyd George's mind was running on the subject of dictators. Both he and Salter agreed that discipline of a sort need not be a bad thing for democracy—'dictatorship by consent' as Salter added in parenthesis. On the way home—Salter was kind enough to motor me—I chivvied him about this; and said, 'I suppose you'll be Lloyd George's economic dictator when the time comes.' He put on his armour and said, 'I am going to China in a few weeks for a little philosophical study.' I said I gathered his ideas were getting a little fluid on the subject of tariffs. He said, 'I cannot jump as quickly as some other people' (meaning Keynes, no doubt).

Both Salter and Lloyd George during the luncheon talk had revealed their dissatisfaction with Ottawa, with the agricultural situation, and with the 'dumping' of Dominion produce at the expense of our farmers.

Lloyd George said Beaverbrook's policy of Empire Free Trade was crazy as ever. It pretended to help our farmer and the Dominion farmer at the same time. Salter agreed. Both agreed that whatever protection was needed for our farmers it was no good for wheat, and

Lloyd George added that it needed to be pointed out that wheat growing (as his own farm experience showed) added nothing to employment. He said this country should go in for a great campaign of fruit and vegetable growing—apples, plums, raspberries, vegetables, cabbage, and so on, the best in all the world (he waved his hands at the table laden with the luscious products of his own orchards). That should be coupled with a great advertising campaign in which doctors and everybody should be pressed to make our people eat fruit. 'Our people don't eat fruit. Why not? They do not know. The East End never buys any fruit. Why? It isn't advertised or marketed properly. Our marketing is most inefficient —like our advertising. We spend money on advertising Empire fruit from overseas when it can't equal our own produce.' Lloyd George warmed up and developed the idea of marketing and advertising with the passion of a crusader. His white hair flopped, his eyes glistened. He got up and strode hither and thither.

He talked of the growing anti-Semitism in this country, and of Hitler and Germany. I asked wouldn't Hitler's policy (possibly like L. G.'s back-to-the-land one, too) lower the standard of living. Lloyd George demurred as far as his schemes were concerned, and pointed out how much better off he was on his simple farm fare. I said I should perhaps have used the word 'simplification' of living rather than lowered standard. He agreed. It would be simplification for a lot of us who were relatively well to do.

Lloyd George. And do you think I should have any sympathy if those who have too much, suffered a little simplification?

We ended lunch with a glass of mead and then Lloyd George took us for a ramble through his orchards and to his shop. Walked us off our feet! Talking all the time! He walked so quickly that he often was yards ahead of us and still talking to his breathless audience struggling on behind. He seemed disappointed when we said we must be getting off back to London.

CHAPTER XIX

Lloyd George and British Farming—My Departure from Bouverie Street—Unexpected Drama at Churt—Freedom.

July 22nd 1933. Lloyd George in the House last night seemed to many of us to go over to 'economic nationalism'. He held we had to dig ourselves in as other nations . . . the Conferences era was over (for some time) . . . there must be Protection for the British farmer, especially from Dominion competition. . . . He believed in open markets, but they had gone.

Beaverbrook this morning welcomes the 'sturdy warrior' to his Empire Free Trade ranks; but, as Lloyd George pointed out to me the other day, he is certainly not with Beaverbrook. Lloyd George's scheme for helping the British farmer doesn't square with Beaverbrook's of helping the Dominion farmer. Anyhow, as my chat with Lloyd George the other day showed, he is flirting with the anti-Free Traders, and is as tired as I am of the vague unrealists of our day.

I saw Riddell yesterday and said it seemed to me the 'world co-operation' idea had had a bad, if maybe only temporary, setback and it was idle not to realize that. I said I had been working for some years among the 'internationalists' but I felt I wanted now to escape from their miasma. I felt the only thing now was to be out for Britain and the British Empire. That was the only alternative. Riddell agreed and said he was glad to hear it. 'We have failed with this open idea and conferences. We shall get back to secret diplomacy and so on. And when in five or six years time that fails again we shall get back to conferences. It's the way of the world.'

Monday, September 4th 1933. Back from a motor tour of France and Switzerland. Found France very much on the qui vive. Sure she does not want conflict with Germany but fears it. 'We hate the idea, but we are ready.' Europe is gloomy. The seeds of trouble are more apparent than in 1914. If Germany is allowed to go on blustering and rearming she will be hard to reckon with five years

hence if Hitlerism survives. All the French I spoke to say, 'Weren't we right in being realists and refusing to disarm?'

Friday, September 22nd 1933. Lloyd George is doing tight-rope tricks about the European situation. Seems as if he thought this country must leave Europe to stew in its own juice . . . that we have no business to be criticizing Germany and Hitlerism when the supine attitude of the League (and the martial attitude of France) towards Disarmament and Versailles Treaty revision have pushed Germany into the present state of aggressiveness. . . . Also some folk still think he is nibbling at some part of Beaverbrook's Empire and Tariff policy. Lloyd George promised some time ago to give me an interview on this —especially to reply to the challenge that Beaverbrook had got him in his pocket. He said he would attack the folly of Beaverbrook's policy. He was going to give this interview to Cummings. Then he grew cool about it because something J. A. Spender wrote in our paper gave him belly-ache. Cummings placated him and L. G. offered to see him at Churt; but I had to send Cummings to Leipzig for the Reichstag fire trial and he (Cummings) wrote to Lloyd George that I would myself go to Churt to get the interview. Up to now Churt is silent. Lloyd George doesn't want to see me, I suppose; but in the meantime I hear of a week-end party there and of Lloyd George assembling his guests and motoring them over to Beaverbrook's place near Leatherhead—where the two house parties joined forces, and, led by Lord Beaverbrook and Lloyd George, raised the Surrey countryside with their vigorous singing of Welsh and other evangelical hymns. As one of the astonished guests said, 'What are we—and what are they—coming to?'

Sunday, September 24th 1933. At a week-end party at Jack Murdocke's place at Brenchley, Kent, met Eric Dunstan, *Star* radio critic, who told me he was the first public schoolboy to enter the 'rag trade' at Selfridge's. Ultimately he became private secretary to Selfridge. He said that on the great man's desk was a card 'Work is Fun', and he suggested to Selfridge it should be altered to 'After Work is Fun'. Sir Leicester Harmsworth,

brother of Northcliffe, joined the party at luncheon to-day, having motored over from Bexhill. He's a dry old stick of sixty-three, witty and shrewd and refreshingly candid about the shortcomings as well as the virtues of the Harmsworths. He said that all in the family who were any good owed it to their remarkable mother. 'Success is very much a matter of good health,' he said, 'and my mother had a remarkable constitution. Rothermere got a very good share of it. Northcliffe not too much. There were fourteen of us, you see. Eleven survived and three died.' He proudly calls himself a Liberal, but secretly confesses we are all really Tories, and he says he's old fashioned enough to believe in the future of those great people the Nonconformists, 'whom you serve, Tom'. He says I should cultivate them more in my paper. Discussion arose about *The Times* and Harmsworth asked what could you expect from a paper run by Fellows of All Souls? 'A Fellowship of All Souls,' he rasped, 'is like water on the brain.' Robert Lynd, also in the party, nearly fell off his chair at that. 'Well,' I broke in, 'let us as honest journalists——' but Sir Leicester held up a chubby hand and looking solemnly at me out of big, rolling eyes, said, 'Tom, in the name of the *Daily Mail* I protest.' In a little chat I had alone with him Sir Leicester told me that Northcliffe (to whom he had been very close) had never really liked Lloyd George politically.

'Northcliffe said to me during the 1916 crisis, "Lloyd George is a dynamo and that's what we want." Northcliffe had more admiration for Asquith. "He's the one man in public life," Northcliffe said, "I have regard for —but not as a war-winner." Northcliffe took his cue about Asquith from his mother who was always telling him Asquith was a gentleman.'

Sir Leicester also told me of the abortive efforts of himself and Lord Cowdray to buy the *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* some time ago and call it the *News and Chronicle.*

Robert Lynd was amused at the fact that the rest of the house-party save him and me were groaning all day about their stomachs and yet were far heftier trenchermen at table than we. They were ever taking pills and

medicines and discussing complaints and operations, yet when it came to the mushrooms and the roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, the grouse and the high cheese and other good things of the table, they left poor Robert and me miles behind. As he and I drove off to London together to-night he said, 'They were a party of confirmed dyspeptics, but I never saw such good eating.'

Monday, September 25th 1933. Lunched with Bernard Falk, who has retired at fifty and written a grand book about Fleet Street. He asked me when I was going to retire. 'Haven't you something put away? You should not go on longer than another five years.' He said he didn't suppose our firm paid as well as others, 'but it's better to be comfortable on a moderate salary than uncomfortable on a big one.' He's had both and he knows.

The next entry in my diary, exactly a week later, gives a touch of presentiment to Falk's observations—for it recorded my departure from the *News Chronicle.*

Monday, October 2nd 1933. An editor no longer. Resigned to-day. Dennis (my son) said, 'It's like God being out of work, dad.'

Of course, in all the circumstances, I ought not to have felt surprised that Monday afternoon, when Layton hinted that it might be better if we parted company. Our interview was friendly, and without excitement of any kind, but I guess my pride was damaged a bit and I wasted no time over farewells. I was offered a good-bye party by the most loyal of staffs, but I asked to be excused. Freedom came to me like a thunderbolt, and how I revelled in it for weeks—freedom from the strain of philosophic incompatabilities, freedom from the machinations of rival Liberals ready to eat each other (and me possibly) up; freedom from the nightmares of Bigger and Better Free Gifts and other stunts, freedom from the constant news vigil from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. the next day. Had I stayed longer I would have been burnt out. I had come more than seven years ago to a struggling paper and now I was leaving it well in the

million-and-more sale class. My work there was done. I remember gratefully a note from Lady Oxford asking me to come and see her, but somehow or other I let that go—there was nothing I felt I could say to her. She believed Lloyd George had been my 'political hero' and I did not want to argue any more about that, or to appear before her as his defeated disciple. I should probably have wrangled with her about the never-ending duel for party hegemony which had ruffled the years of my editorship. I might have quoted to her the ditty of William Watson, as true then as when he wrote it in 1913:

> To Liberalism I owe and pay
> Allegiance whole and hearty—
> The Liberalism which has to-day
> No foe like the Liberal Party.

One thing gave me a little justifiable amusement. Coincident almost with my departure a brochure was issued by the Bouverie Street publicity department—a photographic *Who's Who* on the editorial staff, with myself in the place of honour described as 'An inspired journalist of the modern school under whose guidance the *News Chronicle* is winning increasing popularity with the best type of newspaper reader.'

Such are the sudden ups-and-downs of journalism!

Rosita Forbes wrote insisting on my going to her luncheon-party to the King of Greece. 'A dethroned editor to meet a dethroned king,' I said. I have a diary note of that remarkable luncheon:

> *October 4th 1933.* Tried to call off the Rosita Forbes lunch, but she said she liked rebels and fancied I had been raising hell at the *News Chronicle* and it would be grand to have such a one at lunch. It was a curious lunch—a dethroned king, a dethroned editor, and a maybe dethroned ambassador (the Spanish one whose Government resigned yesterday). Also there—Lord and Lady Elibank, Prince and Princess de Chimay. King George of Greece, now forty-three, wore a monocle when he arrived, refused sherry, was called 'sir' by everybody, curtsied to by Lady Elibank and put at the head of the

table with his host on his left and some lady whose name I forget on his right. We talked in couples and I heard little of what the monarch without a throne had to say. King George came to the throne of Greece when his father, the famous 'Tino' abdicated, but reigned for only fifteen months—from September 1922 to December 1923. His brief reign was troubled, for he was out of sympathy with the revolutionary government in power. In December 1923 the Government ordered him to go with the Queen (Elisabeth of Rumania) 'on leave of absence' pending a decision as to the future constitution. A plebiscite was taken and the people voted in favour of a republic. The ex-King has never abdicated, and believes the day will come when the people will call him back to the throne as a constitutional monarch.[1] He went into exile with a fortune of £25,000. During his ten years of exile he has usually spent each summer in England, living modestly at Brown's Hotel, Albemarle Street, when not a member of a country house-party or visiting Balmoral. His grandfather was a brother of Queen Alexandra and he is a second cousin of King George. He speaks English fluently and once took part in a debate at the Oxford Union. . . . After lunch, when the ladies had left the table and we sipped port or brandy, the King invited us to tell funny stories, obviously preferring the *risqué* ones. When I suggested he should cap the best of the lot he made a gesture and had nothing to say. I liked best at the luncheon the Spanish Ambassador, a distinguished literary man I had met before—Ramon Perez de Ayala. I asked him how diplomacy appealed to the poet in him. He shrugged his shoulders but said it was very fascinating. It was an adventure he was enjoying. He said Spain was moving more to the Left; that the country would not go Monarchist again; that all her troubles in history had been due to the imposition on her people of something that did not suit them. He talked of his boys, one who is going to be an architect and the other an agricultural engineer. In this changing and reconstructing world these, he said, were the careers of the future. They had chosen for

[1] Now, of course, King George has been restored to his throne.

themselves. They were like that—independent and self-reliant. He believed parents should treat their children as equals and friends. The children were always with them in the domestic circle and were versed in affairs. To them their father was 'one of them'. Age did not count. He exercised no intellectual authority over them. Result—complete frankness and confidence even in love affairs. They always argued back their own point of view. This often startled friends who did not know the relationship between father and children. A wise and discerning parent, I thought. He drove me back to Victoria in his car. He said he liked London but there was no place like Madrid—'Better a beggar in Madrid than a millionaire in London.'

Spender wrote me a great-hearted and friendly letter. Another letter offered me a job as 'Organizer of the Friends of Jewry' from an address in Gunpowder Alley. Another invited me to found an Empire weekly paper, and another to go lecturing in Denmark and Sweden. Lord Riddell asked me down to Walton Heath and said I should remember what he told me before and should think now of passing from the employee to the employer class. Lord Beaverbrook rang me up and said I ought to have accepted his £6,000 a year two years ago. Sir Percy Harris invited me to consider standing for the London County Council. Then Lloyd George! He telephoned and invited me to luncheon at Churt, 'and come early'.

I could never have imagined the drama that awaited me. I arrived at Churt in the forenoon. Lloyd George took me to sit by the fireside in his snug, intimate room. We were talking of my resignation when I heard a telephone bell in another room. A moment or two later a maid came in with a slip of paper and handed it to Lloyd George. He glanced at the pencilled message. He said quietly:

'Lord Cowdray is dead.'

'Cowdray dead!' I repeated, thunderstruck.

Lloyd George continued, 'A newspaper has telephoned to ask me to say something for publication. . . . What *can* I say? I didn't know he was ill, did you?'

'No. He must have been all right to attend our trustees' meeting last Thursday,' I said.

'I never knew him very well,' went on Lloyd George. 'It was his father I knew, and *he* hated me. That was through an incident about Northcliffe and the Air Ministry during the War. You know it, Northcliffe behaved rather like a cad about that and old Cowdray thought I had let him down. So he loathed me; and the son has kept up the feud out of loyalty to his father.'

I said I knew Cowdray had never liked Lloyd George and I doubted if he had liked me either, but apart from that he had on the whole appeared to me as a nice old boy of gentle ways.

The maid stood awaiting a reply.

Lloyd George handed the paper back to her. 'No—say I have nothing to say, except, of course, I am sorry.'

He looked at me as she left the room as if to query whether he had done the right thing in refusing to send one of those usual flattering messages about people when they die. I considered what he had done was an example of honesty almost primitive. A less honest man, to my mind, might have earned full marks under the public school code by sending a message of singing praise—the sort of message Lady Oxford condemned in her obituary of Lord Birkenhead.

After a while Lloyd George whispered, 'I am surviving all my enemies, and (pointing at me) so are you.'

We went on with our talk of other things over pre-lunch sherry and biscuits. The rest of the visit to Churt is told in the following and last of the Lloyd George entries in my diary:

> *Thursday, October 5th 1933.* Lloyd George said the Radical tradition had now passed to the Labour moderates who bought the *Daily Herald,* and the best chance of my old paper lay in a vigorous, independent policy leaning towards Radicalism—the very policy I always thought I had stood for. He said he had now no use for, and little interest in, any of the political parties. 'They are not dealing with realities. It should be a matter of hard business now, of putting the country on its feet in these

new times. Our foreign trade we have lost will not come back—not much of it. So we have to set about finding new ways of employing and feeding our population. We've got to turn to other things besides foreign trade. It's a business matter. It wants decision and action and courage. It's all very well to hope for world co-operation and that sort of thing and to believe in it idealistically, but we've now—and first—got to look after this country. There's a man named Stapledon working in Wales—on the Cardigan mountains, experimenting with the soil. He says he can now feed three sheep where only one was possible before. He says he is sure this country can be made self-sufficing. That's a revolution! Think of it. Think of all the land that could be treated scientifically as he says. We would grow all we want in the years to come. He is confident about it. A revolution, I say, and nothing has been heard about it.'

We went in to luncheon—a simple but appetizing and cheery meal. I couldn't help noticing L. G.'s hands—how clumsy they are at holding glasses and things. He is wonderful, this Lloyd George—quick as a cat to pounce on ideas, alert, bright-eyed, vigorous. He was in good form to-day.

'I am a fighter,' he said in reply to some remark I made, 'but I am also very patient. That is what most people do not believe about me. They do not know that I possess the quality of waiting.'

I ventured to say that while he had waited this last year or two, factors had emerged which might create a situation which only he could interpret. His eyes quickened and he said again: 'I am patient.' He said his detractors were either dying off or being found out.

'But I do not want politics again. This freedom of mine has been very sweet. A new life began for me here on my farm—new interests, experiments, doing things and watching results. I can demonstrate here ideas and policies I have believed in. I have made farming pay. This country could make farming pay. Beaverbrook is wrong in concentrating on the big farmer. I have told him so. There are only 100,000 of them—not

enough to sway things. It's the farming family—doing things for themselves—that will save the day. That's what I look forward to. Of course it means simpler life and food—a simplification all round. Hitler is seeing that in Germany. . . . But I am here for good. This is where I have settled and built up something myself—something of my own.'

I asked about his work as M.P. and he said, 'I shall certainly continue to stand for Carnarvon Boroughs. I shall make it quite clear that I am independent of any political party. Yes, if they will still have me I hope to die the M.P. for Carnarvon Boroughs.' I said that as one who had just gained his freedom I could understand his exhilaration. It was grand to feel no one could now order you about—grand to feel that you were clear of a lot of policies and people and circumstances that had irked your soul. I thought my eight years of it had been quite enough.

'I had many more years of it than that,' he said. 'It's great to be free of the lot of them. All my political life they were blocking, intriguing, niggling, holding things up, letting them down. When I look back at what I had to put up with. . . . Ah, well, we are lucky to be free men, both of us. . . . And (with a twinkle in his eye) our detractors and enemies getting polished off before us. . . . Don't be in too big a hurry to rush back to it. Take your time.' He mentioned some idea of starting a paper like *John Bull* to appeal to the masses and at the same time put over the idea of Britain developing her agriculture to the point of being self-supporting. I must not have shown keen enough interest, for he turned away from the subject and neither of us raised it again.

He told me he was working on the third volume of his memoirs. He said the *Telegraph* had done well out of publishing those already written, because many people who bought the paper for his memoirs found it a good sensible paper and stuck to it. We had made a mistake in not getting the book. Our offer of £5,000 was useless. The *Mail* or the *Express* might have capped the *Telegraph's* £25,000, but he thought in all the circumstances it was

a good platform. I agreed we had made a mistake. We ought to have had the Lloyd George memoirs at all cost. Even our Liberal readers (and they *all* wanted to read him; he is always good copy even to his opponents) had to go to the opposition camp for what I think they had a right to expect from us. . . . I asked him about his method of work. He said his publishers and P. Guedalla had suggested the best way was to cultivate the habit of writing 500 words a day. He tried it but it wouldn't work. Some days he could work well, sometimes not. Some days he did as much as 4,000 words. Then he might do nothing for a week because he had to read up and check his references and documents. He has a marvellous index and a room full of documents. He says it is no use if a book like his is not fully documented. Otherwise, if he summarized, people would say, 'Oh, he says so now—but what about during the actual period?' 'Well,' he said, 'the documents of the actual period are there.'

'I wake never later than six. Sometimes earlier. I go to bed usually at nine-thirty, but whatever time I go to bed makes no difference to the six o'clock awakening. So I do not like to lose those hours of rest before midnight. I also take a little sleep if possible every afternoon. Long ago I decided to give up all these social affairs and public dinings-out and so on. They are a waste of time and energy. They do you no good. They lead you nowhere. If there's some one you want to meet, lunch or dine quietly with him and get to bed early. I am sure I have prolonged my life and energy by looking after my rest.'

We talked of disarmament. 'We cannot disarm now,' he said. 'It's a pity, but it's true. Japan is the snag. We lost the opportunity to put her on the right track over the trouble with China. That was due mainly to Simon (Sir John, our Foreign Secretary) and Stimson (U.S.A.). Both weak men. Japan knew it. These Orientals have lived longer than we have. They understand men better. They looked round and said—"Simon (England)—no matter. Stimson (U.S.)—no matter. France—not interested. Germany—quite out of it. Russia—too busy

with her five-year plan." And so on. They knew their men. They went ahead and pulled it off. England and America could have stopped it. We should have started with China. We should have said, "Look here, we must help you put your house in order. Send us some one to talk to who will take on the job instead of us having to watch the bandits at loggerheads." We should have found the man and decided to back him. We should have said, "You promise to do what we—Britain and U.S.—say about restoring order and government in China. Very well. We know that means cash. Here it is. We know that means our support. Here it is." Then we should have gone to Japan, letting her see we meant business and she would have seen the good sense of it—at that time. It would not have meant war then. Now things have changed. She would probably fight. With us things have not changed. She knows that too. She will go on. That's why we can't disarm.'

'And what about France and Germany?' I asked.

'It's no good blaming Germany for talking of re-arming. France is to blame for blocking the moral rights of Germany under the treaty. For France now to point to a militant Germany and say, "We told you so", is cynicism. Besides, all these tales of Germany's re-arming want examining. I know as War Prime Minister that turning over to armaments is a long job. If I ordered a gramophone factory to turn over to rifles it was months before the change could be in operation. And everybody knew about it in no time. I don't believe these stories of secret re-arming. Germany could not resist France—except by the spirit of her youth in bondage, and provoked. I think the best thing would be to leave things in general as they are now *re* arms in Europe, but to make some real move to gain Germany's confidence and assure her that she is not to be treated as an inferior.

'We ought to say, "Look here, let's talk things over. You lost the War, as you justly deserved, and you've had fifteen years of punishment. But it's time we got on a better footing." I would go so far as to restore some of her colonies, get France in a different mood, talk things

over frankly about arms and the whole world situation. Then say, "There you are. Shake hands and let's be friends." Hitler is there put and pretty stable. Those who think the Brunings and people like that are coming back are under a delusion. What's the alternative to Hitler now anyhow? Think of that. Something ought to be done to meet the German point of view. It can't be done merely by supporting French policy.' He repeated that he thought the Radical tradition had passed to the Labour Party moderates. He spoke highly of Arthur Henderson as the most magnificent organizer the Labour people ever had. He seemed attracted by the idea of a Radical nationalism *à la* Roosevelt.

As I came away Lloyd George trotted to the door after me. 'I hope I am going to continue to see you,' he said warmly, with that quizzical little toss of the head to the right which you see even in his picture as a two-year-old, 'I have always had a personal regard for you apart from your position as an editor. We are friends. I have liked you. . . . Now don't do anything in a hurry. . . . Patience.' He gave me to take home a big basket of rosy apples and three jars of Lloyd George honey labelled 'Produce of Bron-y-De'.

Our paths since then have not crossed again.

IPAI LIBRARY
NAINI TAL.

INDEX

Aitken, Hon. Max, 86, 194
Akerman, J., 83
Alexander, Rt. Hon. A. V., 107
Asquith, Hon. Anthony, 218
Asquith, Mr. Justice, 226
Asquith, Rt. Hon. H. H. *See* Oxford and Asquith, Earl
Astor, Lady, 110
Astor, Major, 80, 83, 168, 180
Attlee, C. R., 51
Ayala, Don Ramon Perez de, 238

Bach, Dr. Edward, 37
Baldwin, Rt. Hon. Stanley (Earl Baldwin), 15, 60, 157, 187
Baxter, Beverley, 57, 147
Beaverbrook, Lord, 32, 50, 55, 58, 85, 89, 119, 120, 129, 133, 150, 158, 163, 166, 194, 224, 231, 233, 239
Bellman, Sir Harold, 219
Bennett, Arnold, 36
Bennett, Rt. Hon. Sir John R., 128, 164
Bernays, Robert, 20, 27, 161
Bethmann-Hollweg, 116
Bevin, Aneurin, 164
Birkenhead, Earl of, 91
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine, 120
Blackett, Sir Basil, 202
Blumenfeld, R. D., 31, 58, 70, 82
Braithwaite, Miss Lilian, 125
Brancker, Sir Sefton, 74
Brand, Hon. R. H., 69
Brentford, Lord (Sir W. Joynson-Hicks), 29, 106, 197
Brooke, Lady Dorothy, 70
Brown, Rt. Hon. Ernest, 121
Bruce, Rt. Hon. Stanley, 59, 68
Burbidge, Sir R., 202
Burrows, Arthur, 83

Cadbury, Edward, 26, 71
Cadbury, George, 9
Cadbury, Henry, 5 *et seq.*, 21, 24, 34, 44, 46, 71, 103
Cadbury, Laurence, 71, 79
Camrose, Lord, 182
Castlerosse, Viscount, 58, 150
Cazalet, Miss, 153
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. Neville, 164, 180, 181
Chaplin, Charles, 54, 110
Chausson, Mlle Valentine, 87
Cheng, Mrs. (sister of ex-Emperor of China), 202
Chimay, Prince de, 237
Churchill, Randolph, 152
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston, 45, 88, 95 *et seq.*, 110, 114, 118, 197, 200, 201
Clarke, Dennis, 154, 156
Clemenceau, Georges, 23
Clynes, Rt. Hon. J.R., 90, 110
Collins, Norman, 181
Connaught, Prince Arthur of, 204
Cooper, Lady Diana, 153
Crane, Walter, 151
Cowdray, Lord, 11, 28, 31 *et seq.*, 58, 79, 143, 170, 173, 182, 239
Crosfield, B. F., 79
Cruikshank, R. J., 72
Culbertson, Ely, 133
Cummings, A. J., 20, 25, 78, 89, 109, 112, 137, 141, 143, 148, 160, 163, 164, 167, 171, 174, 175, 188, 194, 196, 204, 210, 219, 234
Curtis, Tom, 19

D'Abernon, Lord, 70
Dalmeny, Lord, 31
Davidson, Rev. Harold, 179
Dawson, Geoffrey, 211
Deeping, Warwick, 203
Dickens, Charles, 19
Dolfuss, Dr., 218
Donald, Sir Robert, 135
Doran, George, 122
Downing, Miss Iris, 72
Dunstan, Eric, 234
Dyson, Will, 83

Edward, Prince of Wales (Duke of Windsor), 80, 87, 128, 150
Edwards, Hugh, 13
Elibank, Lord, 237
Ellerman, Sir John, 225

Falk, Bernard, 236
Fifoot, Edgar, 149
Foch, Marshal, 117
Foot, Isaac, 173
Forbes, Rosita, 237
Ford, Henry, 35
Frankau, Gilbert, 204

Galsworthy, John, 36, 132
Gandhi, 72
Gardiner, A. G., 20
Garvin, J. L., 107, 200
George, King of Greece, 237
George V, King, 30, 72, 114, 145, 162
Gladstone, W. E., 186
Glasgow, 23
Gollancz, Victor, 181, 193
Graves, Charles, 203
Greenaway, Sir Percy, 218
Grey, Viscount (Sir Edward), 114, 189
Griffith, Kingsley, 142
Griffiths, Mr., 25
Gwynne, H. A., 90

Haig, Earl, 117
Harmsworth, Hon. Esmond, 90, 194, 199, 224
Harmsworth, Sir Leicester, 234
Harmsworth, St. John, 200
Harris, Sir Percy, 239
Harris, Wilson, 136
Harrison, William, 50, 57
Healy, Rt. Hon. Timothy, 58
Hearst, W. R., 122, 153
Henderson, Rt. Hon. Arthur, 107, 112
Henderson, H. D., 69
Herbert, A. P., 70
Herbert, Aubrey, 77
Hillier, Frank, 196
Hitler, Adolf, 14, 203, 205 *et seq.*
Hodgson, Stuart, 20, 21, 26, 52, 112, 113, 119, 142, 194
Hodson, J. L., 60, 146, 165, 194
Horder, Sir Thomas, 86
Horrabin, J. F., 84
Howard, Roy, 129
Hughes, Rt. Hon. W., 22
Hunter, Dr., 41
Hutchison, Sir Robert, 36, 121
Hylton, Jack, 218

Jellicoe, Earl, 115
Johnson, Miss Amy, 73 *et seq.*
Johnston, Sir Reginald F., 202
Johnstone, Harcourt, 143
Jones, J. Hugh, 21, 24, 26
Jowitt, Rt. Hon. William, 72, 90
Joynson-Hicks, Sir W. *See* Brentford, Lord.

Kent, Duke of, 224
Keynes, J. M., 113
Knollys, Viscount, 114
Knox, E. V., 180

Lansbury, Rt. Hon. George, 106, 188, 222
Lavery, Lady, 120, 151
Law, Bonar, Rt. Hon. A., 46, 49, 58, 116, 229
Layton, Sir Walter, 36, 42, 59, 68, 77, 80, 88, 112, 131, 142, 145, 148, 152, 154, 163, 167, 170, 174, 175, 202, 216, 236
Levy, Sir Albert, 147
Litvinoff, M., 220
Lloyd, Richard, 192
Lloyd George, Rt. Hon. David, 1 *et seq.*, 11, 21, 25, 27, 32, 41, 44 *et seq.*, 58 *et seq.*, 66, 81, 85, 105, 106 *et seq.*, 112 *et seq.*, 121, 127, 137 *et seq.*, 141 *et seq.*, 156 *et seq.*, 163, 165, 181 *et seq.*, 212, 217, 226, 229, 233, 239 *et seq.*
Lloyd George, Miss Megan, 59, 149, 153
Londonderry, Marchioness of, 136
Luigi, of the Embassy Club, 71
Lynd, Robert, 69, 77, 173, 175, 235

McAra, Sir Thomas, 105
McCundy, Rt. Hon. C. A., 48
MacDonald, Rt. Hon. Ramsay, 13, 48, 72, 90, 110, 118, 127, 132, 136, 148, 151, 152, 158, 163, 167, 171, 181, 189, 203, 223
McKenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald, 88
MacKenzie, C. R., 154
Mackenzie, F. A., 198
Maisky, M., 193, 203, 219
Marjoribanks, E., 69
Mary, Queen, 145
Mary, H.R.H. Princess Royal, 145
Masterman, C. F. G., 21, 22
Mellon, Andrew, 126
Morgan, Dr. Betty, 50
Morrison, Charles, 212
Morrow, Dwight, 69
Morton, H. V., 72
Mosley, Sir Oswald, 151, 201
Muir, Ramsay, 113, 167, 173
Murdocke, J., 202, 234
Murray, Gladstone, 174
Mussolini, Benito, 144

Nichols, Beverley, 125
Nichols, Capt. G. F. ('Quex'), 214
Niemeyer, Sir Otto, 69
Northcliffe, Viscount, 1, 4, 22, 45, 50, 83, 121, 217, 225 *et seq.*, 235

Owen, Geronwy, 184

Oxford and Asquith, Countess, 2, 3, 4, 11, 42, 64 *et seq.*, 84, 91, 111, 144, 146, 149, 151, 160, 162, 172, 178, 208 *et seq.*, 214 *et seq.*, 237
Oxford and Asquith, Earl (H. H. Asquith), 21, 33, 43, 45, 114, 185, 191, 192, 229, 235

Pakenham, Mr., 199
Parke, Ernest, 18
Passfield, Lord, 85
Pemberton, Harold, 71
Perris, G. A., 29, 80
Priestley, J. B., 70, 103
Pugh, Arthur, 69
Pybus, P. J., 171

'Quex' (Capt. G. F. Nichols), 214

Reading, Marquis of, 29, 36
Redwood, Hugh, 177
Reith, Sir John, 103, 181, 218
Riddell, Lord, 90, 102, 195, 217, 233, 239
Ronald, Sir Landon, 133
Roosevelt, President, 160, 212
Rosenberg, Dr. Alfred, 208
Rosenberg, Miss, 171
Rothermere, Viscount, 58, 85, 119, 224
Runciman, Lord, 163, 183, 184
Ryrie, Sir Granville, 69, 73, 76

Salter, Sir Arthur, 230
Samuel, Viscount (Sir Herbert), 11, 26, 42, 84, 152, 158, 161, 163, 172, 183, 184, 189, 195
Sassoon, Sir Philip, 110
Seeley, Gen. Jack (Lord Mottistone), 70
Selfridge, Gordon, 51
Selfridge, Gordon, jun., 200, 201
Shaw, George Bernard, 36, 60, 72, 106, 110
Siegfried, André, 88
Simon, Sir John, 11, 36, 82, 112, 121, 140, 143, 152, 183, 184
Sinclair, Sir Archibald, 112, 163, 173
Snowden, Viscount (Rt. Hon. Philip), 121, 128, 165, 168, 175, 188, 213, 220
Snowden, Viscountess, 68, 173, 174, 220
Sokolnikoff, M., 129, 134, 193
Southwood, Lord (J. S. Elias), 154, 194
Spender, J. A., 20, 33, 81, 173, 210, 214, 234, 239
Stamfordham, Lord, 114
Stamp, Lord (Sir Josiah), 113, 202
Stevenson, Miss, 156, 224
Stradbroke, Earl of, 85
'Strube', 177
Sutton, Sir George, 224

Taylor, George, 70
Thomas, M. (French Minister), 205
Thomas, Rt. Hon. J. H., 85, 128, 135
Thomson, Sir Basil, 114
Tweed, Col., 21, 26, 48, 112, 113, 141, 224

Voronoff, Dr. Serge, 37 *et seq.*

Wakefield, Lord, 73
Wallace, Edgar, 120, 125
Walpole, Sir Hugh, 70
Watkins, H. G., 134
Waugh, Evelyn, 153
Wells, H. G., 36, 69, 86, 125, 144, 168, 175
Wilkinson, Miss Ellen, 64, 84
Williams, Valentine, 83
Wilson, President Woodrow, 23, 115
Wintringham, Mrs., 173
Wolff, Theodor, 205
Woodful, W., 69
Woodruffe, Douglas, 153